

# IN THESE TIMES

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## THE GREAT CONVOLUTICATOR







A mobile soup kitchen in New York's Harlem: big business and its ways are making hunger respectable.

## Hunger in America has gone corporate

By Mark Feinberg

After billions of dollars were cut from food and nutrition programs by the Reagan administration, soup kitchens, food pantries and food banks sprung up in almost every community in the country—rich and poor alike. Throughout the '80s money and energy has flowed into local feeding programs. While churches and communities distributed free food, corporate imagemakers and local politicians found that supporting emergency food relief was an attractive, even a sexy, public relations platform. It's hard to look bad when you're feeding hungry people.

At least not until recently. Now some anti-hunger advocates are discovering a negative side to the growth and success of emergency feeding programs. The code words used to describe these and other problems are "institutionalization" and "corporatization." As the feeding programs have expanded, they have looked to corporate philanthropists for regular donations of money and food. Through these donations, and the seats on boards of directors that go with them, corporations have gained a degree of influence in the anti-hunger movement.

Yet corporate donors, even while pouring money into

short-term crisis relief projects, are not generally eager to work on the long-term poverty issues that cause hunger. Advocates whose paychecks depend on regular corporate funding are unable to speak out freely on behalf of the hungry on sticky political issues.

Meanwhile, emergency relief programs get caught up in their own success: organizational growth becomes a matter of pride and replaces long-term, anti-hunger planning. Some planners and managers take a "bigger is better" approach in searching for more money, buying more vans and refrigerators and hiring more staff people.

**The fat cats of food banking:** One result is that short-term relief is prospering while scant attention and money goes for solving the underlying causes of hunger. As critics within the anti-hunger ranks—like those among shelter advocates—begin to recognize and talk about this imbalance, strains and conflicts are emerging in the movement. These conflicts have intensified as institutionalization and corporatization have become more pronounced, shifting the anti-hunger community from an activist-led movement to a socially conscious burgeoning industry. Like profit-oriented industries, the anti-hunger industry has its specialists in wholesaling (food banks), retailing (food pantries), marketing (the fundraisers and public relations specialists), distribution (food bank networks) and lobbying. The biggest organizational successes have become the industry giants.

Second Harvest is one of the heavy hitters. A network of more than 200 food banks, it solicits and transports surplus food from large manufacturers and supermarket chains to its member banks. Founded in 1979, Second Harvest moved more than 400 million pounds of food in 1988. It is said that if a retail dollar value were drawn for the food Second Harvest distributes, the organization would be among the Fortune 500 companies.

Boston's Project Bread is another giant in the anti-hunger industry. Project Bread's annual Walk for Hunger—probably the biggest walking event in the world—raised a respectable \$600,000 in 1984. After hiring a savvy public relations firm, Project Bread's Walk became even more successful: last year it collected \$2.5 million for distribution to local anti-hunger programs. The head of the PR firm responsible for this success says that the organization is a "hard, driving business" that uses aggressive marketing strategies. Many of the emergency soup kitchens and food pantries funded by Project Bread or receiving Second Harvest food were founded as short-term band-aids in response to a hunger crisis in the early '80s. In the absence of other long-term responses to hunger, and because of the public relations glamour of the hunger issue, these band-aids have become firmly stuck to the system.

Meanwhile, hunger has continued to grow through the '80s, even while feeding programs feed more people. A family that gets a sack of groceries from a food pantry

one week has to come back the next week for another. As Denise Weisberg, an anti-hunger activist in Boston, says, "Every year the situation got worse. The same families kept coming in for food. It became a chronic problem."

**Pangs amid plenty:** Activists like Weisberg point out that while emergency food relief is appropriate in Third World situations where there simply is no food, that is not the case in the U.S. Here, with resources plentiful, emergency food and shelters merely treat the symptoms of the underlying problem—poverty.

Nancy Amidei, a former director of Washington's Food Research Action Center (FRAC), goes one step further. She says that emergency handouts are not only inappropriate, they are also inadequate. While food banks and pantries get "all the money and all the attention," she says, "the best they can do in some communities is to serve 10 to 15 percent of the people needing help." Yet "warehouses cost a lot of money. Trucks, refrigerators and storage cost a lot of money," Amidei says. In the end, what the emergency feeding programs distribute, she continues, "sometimes is crappy food—real junk. Stuff that not only couldn't sell, but, thank God, doesn't."

Because big manufacturer and supermarket chains can claim tax deductions for the food they donate, food banks become a convenient dumping-ground for food that is damaged, mislabeled, old or unpopular. Food banks sometimes have dozens of cases of microwave browning spray, ice cream cones and bulk bags of pulverized candy bar innards. High-protein foods, since they are more expensive, are controlled more carefully by the food industry.

The debate over institutionalization can be quite heated. At stake is the direction of the anti-hunger movement. On one side are those most concerned with "charity"—the day-to-day feeding of hungry people. Their critics, who speak of "justice" and the need for long-term vision, think that too much attention and money goes to

## INSIDE STORY

the short-term alleviation of hunger. "It's easier to fund emergency food relief than long-term change that challenges the system," says frustrated anti-hunger organizer Ruthie Poole.

Advocates for both sides say they realize that both short-term charity and long-term justice approaches are necessary; at issue is a question of emphasis and priority. Long-term justice activists want to see measures implemented to end hunger, such as adequate levels for food stamps, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) food program.

But food programs are only part of the solution. Justice advocates also want to see more money spent on affordable housing, plus a sizable boost in the minimum wage. Many families face the wintertime "heat or eat" dilemma; others go hungry year-round to be able to pay the rent and stay out of the homeless shelters.

Massive government efforts to solve hunger by providing decent levels of income and housing for all Americans are not now in the cards, according to anti-hunger activists on both sides of the debate. In fact, with the increasing institutionalization of the emergency food networks and their growing acceptance by politicians and the public as long-term answers to the problem, the day when hunger gets treated as more than a matter of handouts seems to be slipping further and further away. □

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## Taxpayers likely to drown in savings and loan bailout

By Kevin Kelly

DALLAS

**C**RAFTING A PLAN TO TACKLE THE NATIONAL savings and loan crisis has become a top priority for the Bush administration. The honeymoon following President George Bush's inauguration gave the new administration time to float several trial balloons. But so far the plans suggested by Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady have generated little enthusiasm.

The Bush proposal floated in mid-February offers to spread the estimated \$50 billion cost of closing and merging sick thrifts among thrifts, banks and taxpayers. The administration wants to issue \$150 billion in 30-year bonds with the industry and taxpayers sharing interest payments. Taxpayers would contribute another \$60 million in addition to the \$40 billion budgeted by the Federal Home Loan Bank Board (FHLBB). Former Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. (FDIC) Chair William Isaac says, "This will come out of the taxpayers' hide."

Thrifts and banks don't escape unscathed. Thrifts would continue to pay a special fee of 14.7 cents per \$100 deposits on top of their usual 8.3 cents insurance premium. Banks would chip in by increasing their deposit premiums from 8.3 cents to as much as 15 cents by 1990. These increases could double the \$4 billion a year banks and thrifts currently pay for insurance. The new funds will go to liquidate or merge the nation's sick thrifts. As a first step the administration plans to take over and manage insolvent institutions. Plans exist to effectively nationalize more than 220 thrifts. A week after the Bush plan was announced, the federal government placed 10 thrifts under its control, including Dallas-based Bright Banc, with assets of \$4 billion.

More far reaching are the regulatory changes proposed by Bush. By 1991 thrifts will have to meet the same 6 percent capital requirement as banks. That's almost double the current level. By forcing thrifts to hold more capital, the administration hopes to impose lending discipline and increase depositor confidence.

The Bush plan also calls for new accounting methods. FHLBB member Lawrence White says, "We can't let sick institutions hide behind balance sheets anymore." Thrifts, for example, will no longer be allowed to count goodwill as capital, a method that allowed them to paper over weak positions.

Tougher regulations will be overseen by a new watchdog. The Treasury will take over FHLBB, which the administration believes was too friendly with the industry. Critics blame FHLBB for not taking action against thrifts in 1982, when the industry first started to lose money. The bankrupt insurer of thrifts—the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corp. (FSLIC)—will be taken over by FDIC.

**Too little, too late?** While the Bush plan has generated polite applause on Capitol Hill, it's generating much criticism among industry watchers. They fault the plan for hurting marginal thrifts and not tackling the crisis head-on. Imposing stricter rules and higher premiums on an already weak industry could throw at least 100 more thrifts into insolvency, says Charles Browler, who heads



The S&L fix: each day the industry bleeds another \$1 billion.

the General Accounting Office.

Moreover, the new capital requirements could imperil dozens of additional thrifts. Currently more than 1,300 of the nation's 3,000 thrifts don't meet the 6 percent capital requirement. Low earning power limits their ability to raise cash. The few healthy thrifts are loathe to buy these institutions for fear of diluting their own cash positions.

The Bush plan also rests on this scenario: falling interest rates, no recession and an increased rate of savings. In order for the federal government to limit the taxpayer bailout, it needs to be able to tap the industry. This means mortgage rates—upon which most thrifts make their money—must outpace interest rates. Increased savings are required to raise the haul from the 14.7-cent thrift levy. A recession must be avoided to keep thrifts now balanced on the edge from falling off.

That scenario is in shambles. The Federal Reserve Board is hiking interest rates to calm inflation fears. And in December thrifts saw \$8.1 billion more in deposits leave than came in. This was partially due to the lucrative money market mutual funds are paying—roughly 2.5 percent more than average

thrift deposit rate. The faulty scenario could mean more thrift closures and force taxpayers to cough up an additional \$200 billion by 1992.

Bush's team exacerbated the December deposit run. Small depositors were scared off by Brady's early proposal to tax deposits. "It was an astoundingly dumb statement that caused a lot of harm," says one thrift executive. One thrift consultant says switchboards were swamped by calls from worried depositors.

**Taxpayer revolt:** Meanwhile, consumer groups are beginning to attack the notion that taxpayers must foot the bill. On February 15 Ralph Nader proposed \$40 billion in new taxes to shift the bailout burden from average taxpayers to the wealthy and corporations. Another plan will be proposed by the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) and Rev. Jesse Jackson.

Nader's plan advocates a 10 percent surcharge on corporate income taxes; a 0.5 percent tax on stock sales, increasing the top marginal tax rate to 33 percent from 28 percent; and imposing new taxes on mutual funds, junk bonds, leveraged buyouts and

luxury home mortgages. Nader says, "It's folly to place the burden of the S&L scandal on the backs of the average taxpayer instead of on the backs of those far more able to pay."

ACORN has also filed suit against FHLBB for refusing to release the financial details of the multibillion-dollar bailouts it completed last year. ACORN had earlier asked for the details under the Freedom of Information Act, only to be rebuffed. "I hope they're successful," muses one thrift analyst, "because I sure would like to know what we gave away."

So would the Bush administration. It's pressing for congressional hearings into the spate of deals concluded at the end of last year that could cost the taxpayer about \$6.8 billion. The two biggest deals saw billionaire Robert Bass take over American Savings, the nation's largest insolvent thrift, while an outfit backed by corporate raider Ronald Perelman got control of five of Texas' worst-off thrifts.

Bush and congressional critics of those deals want to investigate whether Bass and Perelman snookered the FHLBB. Perelman, for example, pocketed almost \$1 billion in tax breaks for taking on thrifts worth \$12.2 billion. He paid out only \$315 million, and FSLIC pledged \$5.1 billion in aid. That's roughly \$30 per American taxpayer.

The Bush plan also proposes to give the Justice Department \$50 million for investigating thrift fraud, which is estimated to have caused the demise of one in four thrifts. But there is little hope any probes will recover assets or yield indictments. A crack federal fraud unit in Dallas has failed to make any progress despite a year's labor.

**Hot money, cold shoulder:** But even as the administration calls for hearings and investigations, it refuses to address some of the most important issues facing the thrift industry. For example, many thrifts kept afloat by attracting "hot money," short-term deposits of \$100,000 seeking high interest rates. Insolvent thrifts loaded up on these accounts, then tried to pay the interest by making risky deals. When the deals failed, the thrifts did too.

So far the government hasn't suggested tackling hot money. Nor has there been any serious investigation of the role played by politicians in the mess. House Speaker Jim Wright (D-TX) blocked regulatory action at the behest of campaign contributors; the Reagan administration simply turned a blind eye while FSLIC begged for funds and bank examiners back in 1986.

Serious questions must be asked about the future of the industry. Perhaps it would be better to liquidate insolvent and marginal thrifts now rather than incur costs later. Moreover, since thrifts underwrite only 30 percent of all U.S. home loans, it's possible they have outlived their usefulness. Perhaps the healthy institutions should be rechartered as banks.

But the clock is ticking. Each day the industry bleeds another \$1 billion. If the Bush plan is any indication, the president's wimpy tendencies could end up costing the taxpayers—probably of the average sort—big bucks.

**Kevin Kelly** is a Dallas-based journalist who writes on business issues.



By Joel Bleifuss

## From the subconscious

Vice President Dan Quayle recently stopped off in San Salvador to reassure Salvadoran leaders that Uncle Sam was on their side. Before leaving Washington, the vice president let it slip that the U.S. "condones violence in El Salvador." Prior to Quayle's arrival one prescient U.S. diplomat in El Salvador told the *Village Voice's* Frank Smyth, "I'm just glad I live in a country where you can get Valium over the counter." Sure enough, once in El Salvador Quayle told journalists that the U.S. expects to "work toward the elimination of human rights."

## Creeping counterinsurgency

Quayle might have considered stopping off in the Honduran town of San Lorenzo on the Gulf of Fonseca to visit some 2,000 U.S. servicemen participating in a military exercise called Big Pine '89. According to the Defense Department the troops are stationed in San Lorenzo in order to "to improve, not construct, an airstrip [that will] improve the readiness, logistics capabilities and plan of the participating active duty units and headquarters." Big Pine has been an annual event in Honduras since 1981. But in past years these military exercises have been held near Nicaragua's border, not Salvador's.

## Quiet invasion

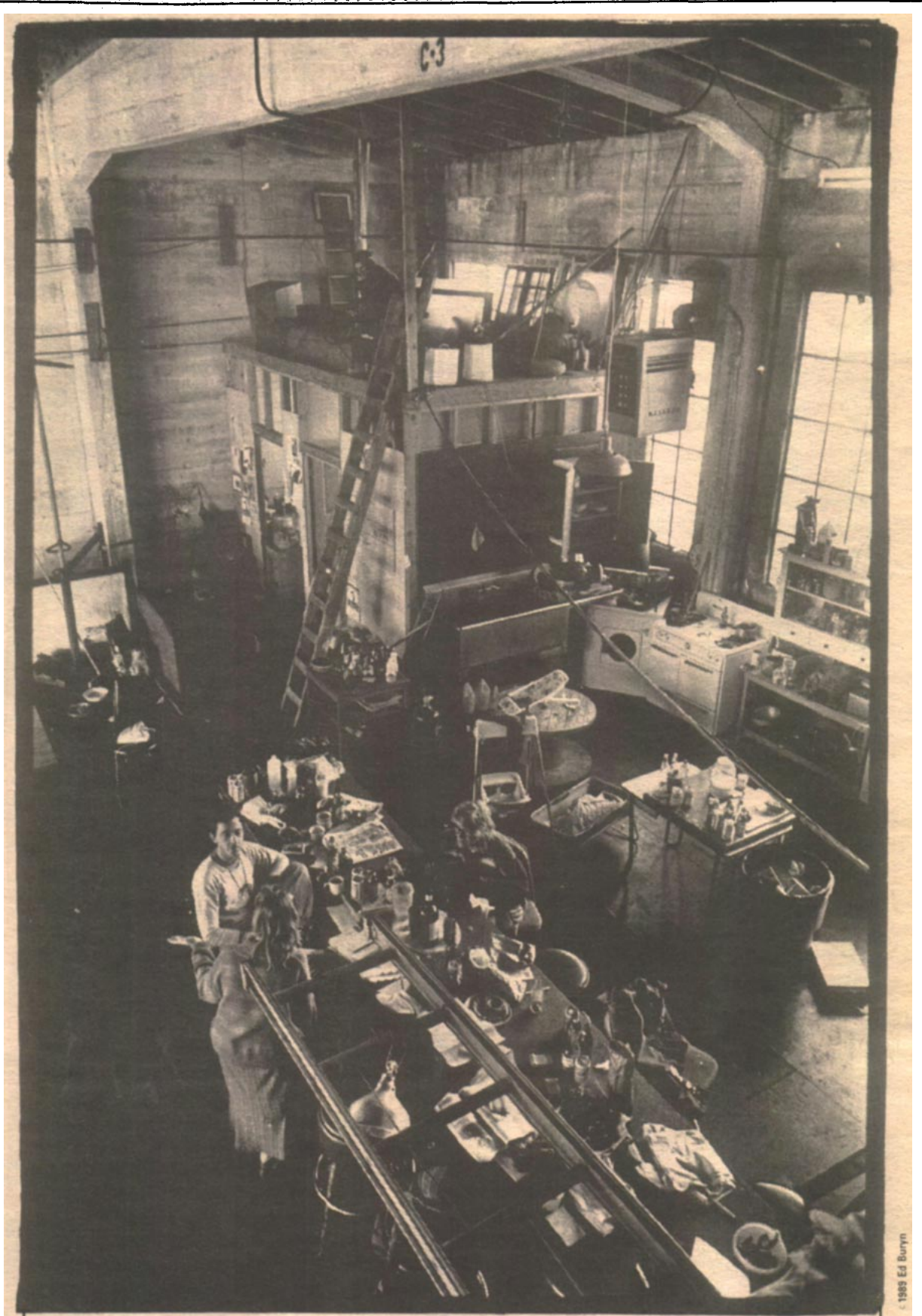
Some Central American support groups have voiced alarm at the increased activity of U.S. troops on El Salvador's doorstep. Peggy Moore of the National Guard Clearinghouse in St. Louis says that while the changing pattern of U.S. troop movements in Honduras is something to be concerned about, it is more important to focus on the larger picture. As in years past, about 10,000 National Guard members will go to Honduras this year to build roads, transport "humanitarian aid" and participate in the Pentagon's regional war games. The Institute for the Study of Honduran Socioeconomics in Mexico City has compiled a list of the U.S. military exercises that have accompanied the eight-year construction of the USS Honduras. For instance, in a 1988 operation called Hand Chase an unknown number of U.S. Marines, along with 500 Honduran soldiers and members of the Honduran national police, invaded the Bahia Islands off the coast of northern Honduras. It was dubbed a "practice surprise landing to see psychological reaction of population." It turns out Honduras is not the only country to host weekend warriors. Panama is a longtime stomping ground. And this year, for the first time, National Guard units (from Hawaii, Kentucky and Georgia) will "train" in Guatemala. "The U.S. is waging a quiet, regional counterinsurgency war—a low-intensity conflict with low visibility," Moore told *In These Times*. "Honduras is the base from which the U.S. can move militarily anywhere in Central America. We're prepared on all the borders [of El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua]. What's the point of building this huge military and intelligence infrastructure in Honduras if the U.S. isn't ready to use it if it chooses? There is no doubt in my mind that it is ready to be used, but that is different from saying it will be used in a combat situation in the near future."

## Fascist fun

Extermination video games developed by British neo-Nazis are beginning to be traded in schoolyards in West Germany. One game's promotional literature reads, "Play Treblinka. Clean society of all parasites. When the gas finishes your work, you will have won." Other titles in circulation include Aryan Tester, Concentration Camp Manager and Cleansing Germany. In these games the player, joystick in hand, eyes on the screen, earns points by killing Jews, Turks, homosexuals and ecologists—all to the electronic tune of *Deutschland über Alles*. Jurgens Lindenau of the West German Office for the Protection of Juveniles estimates that every German school child who plays video games will, sooner or later, be exposed to these fascist messages.

## McBookstores catch terrorist fever

Harry Hoffman, president of Waldenbooks, explained in a *New York Times* op-ed article why his corporation pulled *The Satanic Verses* off the shelves. "When I wonder at the wisdom of the decision," wrote Hoffman, "I keep uppermost in my mind the vision of a 22-year-old store manager who receives a threat in one of our



The garbage people of San Francisco have decorated their warehouse home with scavenged material.

## Warehouse tribes: New twist in urban survivalism

SAN FRANCISCO—On a winter's evening in a warehouse in San Francisco, a group of urban survivors gathers around candles and a space heater to swap stories after a day of painting houses, delivering documents and similar get-by jobs.

It is a scene duplicated in big cities across the country—refugees from the suburbs who have abandoned comfortable homes and predictable futures to forge a lifestyle that superficially resembles that of the city's homeless and disenfranchised. These young exiles from middle-class America have brought little of their past lives with them. Instead, they use what they find in dumpsters to create short-term homes.

For them, living on the edge is guerrilla training for surviving in a brittle and soon-to-be-shattered so-

ciety. "We are making ourselves tough," says Laurie, a Purdue University dropout and a member of an ad hoc collective that calls itself "garbage people."

Andrew, a Cornell University dropout, now studies English literature at San Francisco State University and works in a community thrift shop to augment an education stipend from his parents. "For a while garbage was the only thing that was free. But now garbage is less and less free. People drive around at night and collect boxes and cans. In fact, when I drink a can of Coke now, I leave the can on the street, where it will be easy to pick up."

"Everything here came from the streets. We bought little and stole nothing—well, maybe a few planks of wood. We wanted to build our own bathroom. Our dog is a garbage dog, not on a leash like other people's dogs. People walking their dogs on leashes are on leashes themselves. You just can't see them."

These refugees talk about developing "survival skills"—the creative impulses that they believe were deadened during their formative years by an overprotective environment. They speak with disdain of their parents' middle-class, goal-oriented lifestyle.

Garbage person Patrick first lived in a warehouse in Tucson, Ariz., and has, with Laurie, a new daughter named Rogue. He says he wants to be free of "the system." "It's a consumer mentality—the wholesale acceptance of some developer's greed, a way of life that is not about discovery. It's an insulation from the difficulties of life."

Laurie, Patrick and Andrew, all in their mid-20s, are of a generation that grew up with predictions of nuclear holocaust and environmental collapse. "But we lived in a cocoon," says Andrew. "I had to get out and find real life."

The garbage people's living area is on the second floor of a dilapi-



dated warehouse. It has been sectioned off into sleeping lofts, a bathroom, a large kitchen area and an open center space containing formerly discarded sofas for seating an audience during the frequent performance art evenings. On the ground floor is an elaborate network of skateboard ramps, a soundproof music room with two full drum sets and the group's collection of "stuff" and "junk."

So far, warehouse tribes have succeeded in being invisible to outsiders. "We are surrounded by people who don't know what's going on here," says Andrew. "I never knew about warehouse life in Philly until I left. I was living in the middle of it and never saw it."

Bruce, a 28-year-old Navy veteran and house painter, has lived the warehouse life in Philadelphia and San Francisco. "You can find [warehouse people] in every town in America, but especially in the Rust Belt, where there is so much industry. I can go to any town and within two hours find my people just by standing on the corner in the right part of town."

Warehouse tribes revel in sharing a distinctive costume. Often seen weaving their ways through cities on skateboards, these urban jackrab-

bits can be identified by their ragged layers of sweats and '50s-era print shirts and dresses. They often sport tattoos, nose rings, personalized high-top sneakers and a variety of mohawks.

Although each warehouse community develops its own philosophical outlook, the members generally agree that they are not skinheads, heavy-metal rockers or hippies. They are known to each other as skaters or performance artists.

Their furtive lifestyle and art have origins in the punk music scene. Their music discourages hero worship and promotes bonds among people. "One of the most important things about punk is not to immortalize stars," says Andrew. "Most groups that are famous don't even have records."

The common denominator among warehouse tribes is transient living and the rejection of a controlled environment. They usually live in buildings under a loose lease or in abandoned industrial sites that are soon to be razed or sold. There are so many warehouse tribes—an estimated 1,500 in San Francisco alone—that insiders suspect any rundown commercial space of housing a collective. Resistant to all organizational efforts, tribe members

walked out of a recent presentation by the San Francisco city permit department on "how to legalize your living space."

Bernard, another urban survivalist, lives in a "squat" in Cologne, West Germany, where he says the motivations for warehouse living are different. "In Germany, the movement is old and quite established, the groups are drawn together from all walks of life for radical political purposes. In America, people are not so involved in larger movements. They are on more individual trips." Garbage person Bruce agrees. "Here, each person can have his own rendition of how he wants to live. Some warehouses are into drugs, art, noise. In others, everybody works and goes to bed early."

Laurie says she has been thinking a lot about her lifestyle and the kinds of controls her young daughter will face as she grows up. "I don't know what will happen to me, and I don't know how much this way of life will affect Rogue, but I expect to keep finding creative ways to live. Being able to define my space, to change it if I want to, that's very important to me."

—Julia Gilden

*A version of this story appeared in Pacific News Service.*

## From grand wizard to state representative

BATON ROUGE, LA.—David Duke did in Louisiana what most people thought was impossible anywhere in 1989. The former grand wizard of the national Ku Klux Klan and current president of the National Association for the Advancement of White People was elected to a seat in the state legislature.

Duke was sworn into office on February 22 despite challenges in the legislature and in court based on claims that he had not met the one-year residency requirement in his district. But many black and liberal lawmakers felt the attempts to stop Duke were misdirected. They pointed out that, even if Duke would have been kept from the legislature, the sentiments that put him there could not be so easily shoved aside—and the last thing they wanted was a martyr on their hands. Instead, the black and liberal lawmakers looked forward to watching their conservative colleagues squirm when they find Duke making speeches in support of their right-wing positions.

Some observers, noting the surprisingly warm reception Duke received from many of his colleagues in the statehouse, worried that his election would set back race relations and touch off a nationwide wave of racially inspired campaigns. And while it has noticeably raised the tension level in interracial relations, the election is more likely to cause a much-needed bout of national soul-searching and consciousness-raising. Many blacks—

who were not as surprised as whites that racists get elected to the legislature—said they preferred Duke's brand of open racism to the currently fashionable kind that is submerging and more effective.

In defeating fellow Republican John Treen in the February 18 runoff election, the white supremacist and former Nazi Party member gained the national media spotlight and triggered a bout of handwringing by Republican Party officials. People all over the country asked each other, how?

Duke won the election by 227 votes in a 99-percent white suburban district bordering predominately black New Orleans despite the fact that his opponent's campaign was being run by Lee Atwater and the Republican National Committee, which delivered money and endorsements from President Bush, Bush's son and former President Reagan. Immediately after the election Atwater said he would ask the GOP executive committee to repudiate Duke and "drum him out of the party." Atwater later backed off when local party officials complained that they were playing into the hands of Duke, who shrewdly has used the outside interference to his advantage.

Some saw great irony in the party's efforts to distance themselves from Duke (see editorial on page 14) while at the same time using calculated racial appeals to attract white voters. Bush's political advertisement associating Democratic presidential candidate Michael Dukakis with black rapist Willie Horton is the most notable example. "Now you have the Republicans saying, 'Oh, Lordy, Lordy, Lordy, isn't

this terrible?'" said California Democratic Rep. Tony Coelho. "Well, they were playing with matches; they were playing with fire."

Duke's appeal was in many ways similar to Reagan's conservative populist approach: Reagan created an image as a friend of the little guy, railing against government regulation and interference. But the little guy in Reagan's world, like Duke's today, is lily-white. Reagan attacked those who received government aid as "welfare queens" and "cheats," while defending the working man, who found blacks and other minorities a convenient explanation for problems such as crime and drugs.

Democrats should be careful not to make too much of Duke's recent party registration until their own house is in order. Republicans love to point out that Sen. Robert Byrd (D-WV)—who just stepped down as the party's Senate leader—is a former KKK member. Blacks have only recently begun to take their rightful place in the party, and only when they forced their way in via Jesse Jackson's presidential campaigns. And many on the left claim that the failure of half-hearted liberal programs such as public housing projects have exacerbated the perils of urban life.

While the focus on Duke intensifies in the glare of the national spotlight and Northerners content themselves with the thought that it could only happen in the South, the "climate of hate" of which Duke is only a symptom continues to build, unchecked by mainstream Republicans or Democrats.

—Zack Nauth

stores in a mall somewhere." Like, say, Joplin, Mo., Hoffman wrote. "It is simply not the legitimate function of a book retailer to solve the problems of international terrorism." No, but one might expect that it is a legitimate function of a working intellect not to allow the bogeyman of international terrorism to dictate what is and what is not placed on U.S. bookshelves. To make just that point, the National Writers Union, the labor organization that represents *In These Times'* freelance writers, sponsored four demonstrations in support of Salman Rushdie last week. In San Francisco and Boston the actions were directed at B. Dalton, Waldenbooks and Barnes and Noble—book chains that are refusing to carry *The Satanic Verses*. In New York protestors gathered at the office of Iran's U.N. mission and from there went to picket Barnes and Noble. Writers Union members in Washington demonstrated in front of the Iranian interest section that is located in the Algerian Embassy. There they called on the U.S. to protect authors, booksellers and publishers from these threats, asked bookstores not to succumb to such intimidation and demanded that Iran's leaders withdraw their contract on Rushdie's head.



## Let the presses roll

Keter Publications, the largest publisher in Israel, is rushing to come out with a Hebrew translation of *The Satanic Verses*. Chief Editor Niva Lanir says her considerations were purely literary. But she admits, "I know it is going to cause a lot of noise." Over in Jerusalem, Adnan Hussein, director of the Supreme Islamic Council, is not losing any sleep over Rushdie's alleged heresy. "Islam is a giant that a small book like this doesn't hurt," he says. "We don't care about the book. We understand Islam well. We are proud of Mohammed and we believe what this man publishes about Islam is not important. It doesn't mean anything."

News clips, memos, press releases, reports, anecdotes, raw gossip—send them all to "In Short," c/o *In These Times*, 1300 West Belmont, Chicago, Ill. 60657. Please include your address and phone number.



By Salim Muwakkil

## Another difficult test for collegiate athletics

**A** NEW NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION (NCAA) rule cutting off scholarship aid to academically unprepared student-athletes has forced a national debate on the skewed priorities of collegiate sports and brought the system's race and class dynamics into sharper focus.

The rule—Proposition 42—was passed in January by a vote of 163-154 and is scheduled to take effect in the fall of 1990. Many NCAA insiders insist, however, the proposal will be overturned at the next NCAA convention in January 1990. A poll recently conducted by the *Washington Post* found fewer than 40 percent of the NCAA members now support the measure.

Proposition 42 denies high school graduates athletic scholarships to Division I colleges if they fail to achieve a minimum score of 700 on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), or at least a 15 on the American College Testing (ACT) exam and maintain a "C" grade average in a high school core curriculum. The regulation is actually an amendment of Proposition 48, a measure implemented in August 1986 that stops freshmen athletes who fail to meet those SAT and grade requirements from playing or practicing with Division I teams. Under Proposition 48, affected students lose a year of playing eligibility, but are still allowed to receive an athletic scholarship during their freshman year. Proposition 42 would eliminate the scholarship altogether.

The tough amendment was adopted without much fanfare during the NCAA convention two months ago. But Georgetown University basketball coach John Thompson brought public attention to the issue soon after when he walked off his job for a week to protest the measure. Thompson, one of the few African-American coaches of a Division I team, is well known for his commitment to educating athletes. Unlike most major colleges, a high percentage of Georgetown's players graduate.

**SAT dissatisfaction:** Thompson's chief complaint with the proposition is that it discriminates against black and poor students, who are the major victims of substandard schooling and who therefore are less able to meet the measure's academic requirements. These were also the very students who have little possibility of attending college without scholarship assistance, Thompson argues.

The Georgetown coach's protest carried considerable symbolic weight, but he's not alone in denouncing the new NCAA ruling. A wide range of critics think Proposition 42 is a bad idea, including, it now seems, the same NCAA members who initially supported it. Critics of the ruling seem to agree that its most objectionable aspect is the importance placed on standardized tests as admissions criteria.

Proposition 48 itself was opposed by many African-American educators and civil rights leaders who claimed the requirements were unfair because standardized tests are culturally biased against black student-athletes. While there remains some disagreement about the tests' biases—many theorists insist the major bias is one of class—most experts concur that standardized examinations have a limited function.

According to Timothy Walter, a professor

of physical education at the University of Michigan, there is considerable evidence that such tests are bad predictors of future academic achievement. In a 1987 study he conducted that followed the progress of student-athletes with low SAT scores, Walter found "the vast majority of those who would have been predicted to fail as a function of their SAT score in fact succeeded."

Even the College Board, the organization of colleges and universities that sponsors the SAT, urges that the test not be used "as the sole basis for important decisions affecting the lives of individuals" to the exclusion of other relevant information.

**Student exploitation:** Subsequent studies confirmed some of the fears of Proposition 48's foes. A disproportionate number of those affected by the measure have been African-American. And although there has

### SPORTS

been no drastic decrease in the number of black student-athletes in Division I schools, a downward trend is discernible.

But most responsible black leaders concede that Proposition 48 is a step in the right direction. It is clear to them that black collegiate athletes—particularly those playing

to the idolatry of athletics.

Proposition 48 at least provided athletes with an incentive to sharpen their focus on academics—though many insist the standards are still too low. What's more, by allowing the school to risk a financial scholarship on an undereducated student for a year, the measure encourages colleges to become more involved in the academic development of the marginal student-athlete. According to many accounts, the ruling has succeeded in boosting the overall academic performance of student-athletes in big-time college sports.

"I am fundamentally supportive of rule 48," says Harry Edwards, an African-American professor of sociology at the University of California at Berkeley and a well-known expert on sports and race. But Edwards characterizes Proposition 42 as a "racist travesty." While Proposition 48 allowed academically marginal students time to acclimate themselves to the rigors of the college classroom, the amended regulation offers no such opportunity.

With the new ruling, Edwards says, "the NCAA is telling black student-athletes this: 'If we can't exploit you, we don't want you on campus.'"

Georgetown's Thompson notes that black athletes have helped build many of the powerful athletic programs now pumping revenue into those predominately white Division I colleges. And, he says, these athletes rarely are adequately compensated for their contributions. For example, former Georgetown basketball player Patrick Ewing alone is estimated to have generated \$12 million of revenue for the school during his four-year stint.

Thompson says those same schools that benefit so bountifully from black athletic talent are, through their support of Proposition 42, turning away from the special problems of black student-athletes. These academically deprived students will "no longer have an opportunity to show that a poor test score ... is not a result of the lack of native intelligence," he says.

African-Americans are not the only ones protesting the new regulation. Former De Paul coach Ray Meyer wrote in a recent *Chicago Sun-Times* column, "No thought was given to the problems that come with using standardized national tests in admissions and the disparity in the country's educational system. Do you penalize a man because of the environment he grew up in?"

**Bullied by Bulldogs:** Proposition 42 was spawned by the case of Jan Kemp, a University of Georgia English instructor who was dismissed for protesting special treatment for student-athletes. Kemp sued the school, negotiated a healthy settlement and was allowed to rejoin the faculty. In the aftermath of the case, Georgia decided to stop accepting all athletes who failed to meet Proposition 48 standards.

Since that voluntary decision restricted the pool of talent available to Georgia and put the Southeast Conference (SEC) school at a competitive disadvantage with others in the conference, Georgia's athletic director

successfully lobbied other SEC schools to follow its lead. But since that would subsequently place the SEC at a competitive disadvantage with other Division I conferences, the conference made its case—successfully—that the entire NCAA should adopt the restrictive standards of Proposition 42.

**Bye-bye black males:** Just a week after Thompson's protest walkout, the American Council on Education (ACE) released a report noting that "participation in higher education by black males has slipped alarmingly since the mid-'70s." Enrollment of black males dropped from 4.3 percent in 1976 to 3.5 percent in 1986, according to the study, the largest decline of any racial group participating in higher education.

According to Reginald Wilson, senior scholar of the ACE's Office of Minority Concerns, this education gap has accelerated because of a series of severe social and economic problems that afflict black males from an early age. All too often, Wilson explains, these factors conspire to kill young black males' interest in college even before they reach adolescence. Their interest in sports, however, tends to be high—and many black educators and activists seek to parlay that remaining interest into something more valuable.

**Pay for play:** But Nebraska State Sen. Ernest Chambers, one of the country's most articulate critics of big-time college athletics, asks, "Why should someone who aspires to be a professional athlete, a trade that has nothing to do with books, have to train himself for his professional future by going to college?"

Chambers has introduced several bills that would transform football and basketball players at the University of Nebraska into state employees subject to a statutory wage scale. Chambers' views on the nature of collegiate sports raise serious questions about the treatment of amateur athletes.

"The NCAA is only interested in making money from these players, chewing them up and spitting them out," he explains. "Everybody is getting rich except the people who produce the wealth."

While Chambers is concerned about the lack of emphasis big-time college programs place on academic preparation, he focuses more intently on the flaws of a system that profits so handsomely from the confusion of education with athletics.

"Proposition 42 grew out of a concern with profit, not out of a concern for the minds of the student-athletes," he said, noting that the motive for the ruling was the SEC's worry about other conferences' competitive advantages. "First the South ensures that African-Americans receive inferior educations by denying them sufficient resources, then it punishes them down the line for not receiving what was never intended for them to receive," Chambers said. "It's another case of blaming the victim."

**Sports withdrawal:** But while Harry Edwards denounces Proposition 42 as racist and elitist, he holds African-Americans accountable for a disproportionate emphasis on athletic excellence as a cultural value. "The black family and the African-American community tend to reward athletic achievement much more and earlier than any other activity. As a people, we can no longer permit many among our most competitive and gifted youths to sacrifice a wealth of personal potential on the altar on athletic aspiration and put playbooks ahead of textbooks." □



Georgetown coach John Thompson

in the "revenue producing" sports of basketball and football—are systematically being exploited for their talent and receive neither education nor revenue for their troubles.

"Instead of complaining from a cocoon of mediocrity," says A.S. "Doc" Young, a sports columnist syndicated in several black newspapers, "we should do whatever is necessary to make sure now that our young athletes qualify themselves for college education before they finish high school. Only a small handful will turn professional. Without proper education the majority will wind up being underachievers in an ever more complex world."

Young's position echoes that of many who urge African-Americans to devote more energy to the problems of education and less



By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON, D.C.

**S**CIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS WHO UNDERSTAND the sad state of the American electronics industry are becoming radicalized. "We have to do something this year," Massachusetts Institute of Technology engineering professor David Staelin told a meeting of engineers, economists and business leaders held here February 14 by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE).

At the meeting Staelin and the IEEE proposed that the government sponsor a new Technology Corporation of America that would research, develop and produce everything from semiconductors to high-definition televisions (HDTVs). The American Electronics Association (AEA) is moving in the same direction. It is proposing a consortium of electronics firms that would develop and manufacture HDTVs.

But the engineers' sense of urgency is not shared by all business leaders and lawmakers. Many business executives are afraid that government participation in the electronics industry will set a dangerous precedent, while lawmakers and the national press are obsessed by the deficit. At the same time, foreign firms, worried about American competition, are also working hard to discredit new approaches.

At stake here is not only the viability of American industry in the 21st century, but the development of a new political economy that goes well beyond the timid welfare capitalism of the New Deal.

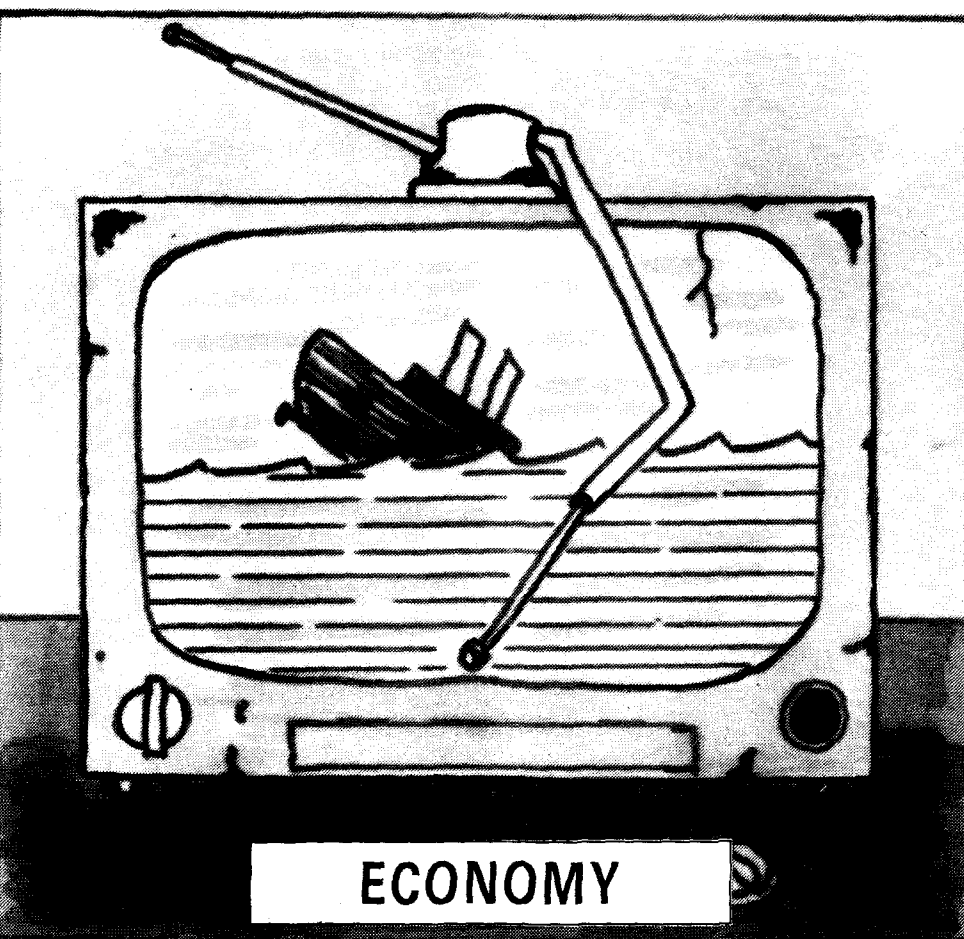
As the engineers explained at the IEEE workshop, American weakness in electronics is only apparent when one looks inside computers and televisions to see where the random access memory (RAM) chips and other devices have been made. "The problem is submerged where customers and the public don't see it but where engineers do," Staelin said. The U.S. retains its scientific edge, but lags behind Japan and Western Europe in ability to translate science into commercially viable products. "The entire infrastructure that supports low-cost manufacturing has vanished," Staelin said.

The engineers no longer believe that private firms, acting on their own, will be able to re-establish this kind of manufacturing capability. Left on their own, American firms have stopped making televisions. Only one domestic manufacturer, Zenith, remains, and it is trying to sell its television division to a foreign company. Government intervention is necessary, not only to create a new corpo-

**Death Valley Days have come to American TV and electronics firms. And it looks like the invisible hand can't change channels or turn them back on without a switch in thinking.**

rate entity, but to contribute development costs, which are astronomically high, and to guarantee initial demand.

According to an industry newsletter, *New Technology Week*, the engineers' proposal for a technology corporation is modeled partly on the old Radio Corporation of America (RCA), which the U.S. Navy Department helped found in 1919 in order to



## U.S. electronics industry wires Uncle Sam for help

develop an American capability in wireless communication. RCA's stock was originally purchased by a consortium of American firms, and it was defined as a government-regulated utility.

**The static quo:** The engineers envisage a stronger government role in any new corporation than the administrations of the '20s played in the development of RCA. In contrast to other current proposals, they also insist that the new corporation not merely develop prototypes but actually make and market products. "Manufacturing has to be part of the process," Staelin said.

At the meeting, however, business leaders from IBM, Digital Equipment Corporation and Motorola balked at having extensive government involvement. In the final statement, the participants endorsed merely "industry-led consortia with government co-operation and support." Clarity gave way to fuzziness. An understanding of the industry's ills failed to produce a means to cure them.

The AEA proposal for an HDTV consortium has met with a different and more insidious kind of opposition. Last month both the AEA and the Electronic Industries Association (EIA) submitted briefs to Rep. Ed Markey's (D-MA) Subcommittee on Telecommunications and Finance. Markey is planning to hold hearings this month on whether the government should aid American producers to compete with Japanese and Western European firms.

The AEA is composed of American electronics firms, many of whom used to be dogmatic defenders of the free market. They have, however, dramatically changed their thinking in the past year. In the area of electronics, the AEA brief says, "The long course of free-enterprise action may serve to disadvantage the best interests of the U.S." In its brief the AEA calls for government-funded consortia that bring together private firms and universities to research, develop and

produce new TV technologies. Like the IEEE, the AEA argues that if the U.S. cedes the HDTV market to foreign firms, it will fall fatally behind in other electronics fields.

**On the Sony side of the street:** The EIA, dominated by Japanese electronics giants like Sony and Toshiba, initially opposed any government aid to American electronics firms. But in its brief to Markey's committee it changed course. Its differences with the AEA proposal are now more subtle, but perhaps no less telling. The EIA brief argues against a preoccupation with funding HDTV consortia. "A fundamental premise of this report is that competitiveness is primarily an economywide issue and is logically distinct from the competitive position of the

producers in a particular industry and activity." The EIA wants the government to give priority to reducing the deficit (which will also, incidentally, protect Japan's huge investment in American bonds) and to providing industrywide tax incentives.

The EIA acknowledges that some kind of consortia might be desirable, but it insists that they not be limited to American firms. "Foreign-owned U.S. producers already play a leading role in the TV industry," the EIA writes. "Any policy efforts that attempt to exclude these producers will delay the development and introduction of HDTV technology in the U.S. and discourage foreign producers from expanding their production and R&D operations here." The EIA also questions whether actual public funding is necessary. "The main roles for the government in R&D consortia," EIA argues, "are to serve as a broker for the negotiations that produce them... and to monitor them to prevent antitrust violations."

As often happens in these debates, the Japanese-funded brief is better written and more attractively produced. The IEA's arguments are also not without merit. For instance, a good case can be made for foreign participation in consortia if foreign firms participate on a quid pro quo basis. "The idea of the consortium is to improve the technological base of the U.S.," Cornell University economics professor Alan McAdams said at the IEEE workshop. "If we can do that on a reciprocal basis with foreign firms, that's fine." But many engineers and business leaders fear from past experience that the U.S. will not be able to work out adequate reciprocal arrangements with the Japanese.

The real question about the IEA's brief, however, is whether it is meant as a serious contribution to a debate or is simply meant to stall any decision while the Japanese and West Europeans plow forward with their own government-sponsored and government-funded HDTV plans. The motives behind these proposals have to be understood before their objective merits can be weighed.

Unfortunately, as the engineers argue, there isn't a lot of time to resolve these matters. "The electronics industry is in the same state as the S&Ls," David Staelin says. "The longer we wait, the harder it is going to be to rescue it." □

### Will high-definition TV have remote control?

Over the past decade no group has argued more eloquently for an American industrial policy than the Berkeley Roundtable for International Economics (BRIE). BRIE's economists include Stephen Cohen and John Zysman, the authors of *Manufacturing Matters*, Laura Tyson, Jeffrey Hart and Michael Borrus. Having their imprimatur on a high-tech economic policy is akin to having a weapons system endorsed by Sen. Sam Nunn.

BRIE's economists have also been critical of Japanese trade policies, and they have worked closely with the American Electronics Association (AEA). But the Japanese-dominated Electronic Industries Association (EIA) was able to hire them to write their brief on high-definition television. In an interview with *In These Times*, BRIE's Hart criticized the AEA position as "America first." He argues that American firms are too weak to build HDTV on their own and that shutting out foreign producers will simply isolate American firms from important technological developments.

Hart could be right, but it depends on what kind of guarantees American firms can extract from the foreign firms that participate in U.S.-government funded consortiums. BRIE does not spell out any conditions in its EIA brief, and BRIE members themselves have a very different conception of such consortia from the Japanese firms in the EIA. When asked which foreign firms will participate in government-funded consortiums, Hart favors European, and not Japanese, participation. The more powerful Japanese firms, Hart warns, might "take the ideas and run." But Sony's American subsidiary, a prime mover in the EIA, has already expressed interest in joining an American-funded consortium.

BRIE believes that it is merely using the EIA as a medium for its own ideas, but EIA could be using BRIE to legitimate obstructionism disguised as debate. The real question in the debate between the AEA and IEA is not who is right, but who is really after what.

-J.B.J.





A central Illinois feedlot: Europe wants hormone-free meat. Why not sell it to them?

By David Moberg

**T**HE CONTROVERSY OVER U.S. BEEF EXPORTS to Europe that erupted last December may have had as much to do with excess hormones in macho U.S. trade negotiators as it did with any hormone residues in exported steaks. Once again the U.S. looked like a raging bully, determined to capture markets by force rather than by responding to European consumer demands.

The European Economic Community (EEC) had already given the U.S. a special year's extension to comply with a hormone ban that was uniformly applied to all producers, European or not, and even offered to increase purchases of top-grade U.S. beef. Yet the U.S. refused to meet European standards. So the ban was imposed and the U.S. retaliated against seven Common Market exports, provoking European counterthreats. The furor seemed out of proportion to the relatively small, \$100-million annual sales from the U.S.—a tempest in a consommé cup.

But the beef beef touched on deeper controversies over agricultural trade that have immense long-range ramifications. U.S. negotiators have been at odds with much of the world over its hard-line proposals for new agricultural trade rules. "I think it's all about positioning and power, and it's reflective of discord [between the U.S. and EEC governments]," says Lorette Picciano-Hanson, an agricultural policy analyst for Interfaith Action for Economic Justice. "Any small battle becomes a large battle."

Now the Bush administration is trying to defuse the hormone controversy, as experts negotiate during a 75-day cooling-off period a face-saving retreat for the U.S. To break the trade talk logjam, Bush will drop Reaganite demands to eliminate all government agriculture aid by the year 2000 while still pursuing the same goal more obliquely. The controversy over agricultural trade and beef hormones also reflected divisions within the U.S. itself over the direction of agriculture. Texas Agriculture Commissioner Jim Hightower undercut the administration's position in late January by offering to sell Europe Texas beef that met their standards. Not so incidentally, Hightower has been both a leading advocate of agricultural supply management programs that clash with Reagan and Bush free-market policies and a proponent of more creative agricultural marketing to benefit small farmers.

Already at least one-third of U.S. beef is hormone-free, argues Mark Ritchie, a farm policy analyst at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Most of it is produced by smaller

## Bush is off the ranch on the beef dispute

ranchers and farmers. U.S. agricultural suppliers are, however, the major world producers of hormones, "and any ban on the use, if it was picked up, would hurt that sale," Ritchie says. Besides, hormone use—which boosts consumption of low-cost grain—is essential to most giant cattle feedlots.

**Winners and losers:** Hormones aside, the big international battleground now is the Uruguay Round of negotiations on revision of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) that started in 1987. In those talks the Reagan administration proposed eliminating all agricultural price supports, import barriers and export subsidies over 10 years. It also wanted international health standards (to avoid pesky consumer pressures such as cropped up with beef hormones). It forcefully pushed this radical free-market agenda, holding up progress on other trade issues. But despite general agreement among GATT participants for liberalizing trade, there remains strong resistance to such a drastic dismantling of existing national agricultural programs.

The U.S. in particular wanted to dismantle both the Common Agricultural Program (CAP), the foundation of the European Common Market, and Japanese agricultural policies. In both Japan and Europe, consumers pay substantially above world-market prices for food. Conservative U.S. agribusiness strategists think that in a wide-open market, many European and Japanese farmers would be driven out by lower-cost imports from the U.S. (Actually, the conservative strategists are interested in low-cost commodities from anywhere. In a free-trade world, U.S. agricultural producers might not prove competitive, and cheap imports to the U.S. would increase). At the same time, the price war would eliminate even more U.S. farmers.

Eventually, such strategists argue, the winners in this war would reap slightly higher world prices. The big beneficiaries will be corporate agribusinesses, which have pushed this export-oriented, low-price strategy.

But Japan and Europe remember the not-so-distant past, when they were unable to feed themselves. Like many other countries, they want to assure themselves a measure

of food security. "We've never been dependent on foreign sources of supply for basic foodstuffs," notes Washington trade consultant Dale Hathaway. "If we had that concern, we'd be very nervous about it."

Some countries are even more nervous when they see how the U.S. capriciously uses food and trade embargoes as political weapons. Other countries also have a deep social commitment to keeping small farmers on the land and adequately compensated. At times the motivation is crassly political: small farmers are declining, but still crucial, voting blocs

**The dust is settling from the Reagan stampede to free-market farming. The results include instability in both prices and policies.**

in Japan, Germany, France and elsewhere. But for varied reasons—with rationales from both the political left and right—urban Europeans and Japanese see preservation of rural life as culturally and environmentally important. By large margins they express support for their countries' farm programs by acquiescing to higher food prices.

**The high cost of failure:** The worldwide food surpluses of the past few decades are in part a tribute to the overabundant success of agricultural policies that the U.S. now wants to dismantle. Producer countries looked to foreign buyers, even those paying less than the cost of production, to unload their surpluses. Since the '70s U.S. agriculture has been the dog wagged by what used to be its small tail—international trade. But that trade has proven volatile and not very remunerative for most producers. Most farmers and consumers want—and Third World countries in particular need—stable prices and dependable supplies, not simply the lowest-cost farm products, especially since low farm prices benefit processors more than consumers.

During the early '80s, when the dollar was

overvalued and the depressed world market shrank, U.S. agricultural exports declined. Other producer countries, benefiting from improved domestic farm policies and better technology or driven by the need to expand agricultural sales to pay foreign bank debt, offered the U.S. new competition. The Reagan administration was obsessed with

## AGRICULTURE

regaining market share by driving down prices to force other countries out of the export market.

That policy has been a costly failure. Farm program costs have skyrocketed, and by some calculations the U.S. spent more to subsidize exports in both 1986 and 1987 than the net balance of agricultural exports over imports. Although agricultural exports from the U.S. increased over the past two years, the gain was clearly illusory—and often had disastrous consequences. For example, the 1985 farm bill increased subsidies for rice exports. As a result, world rice prices were cut in half, from around \$8 a hundredweight to less than \$4. The U.S. spent up to \$17 in subsidies for each new hundredweight in exports, according to *Washington Post* reporter Ward Sinclair.

The U.S. export drive devastated the rice-producing economy of Thailand, but contrary to the grand theory of U.S. strategists, the Thais did not withdraw from the market. Partly because Thai peasants had no alternative, and partly because the government needed foreign exchange to pay its debts, Thailand cut prices to meet the U.S. subsidized competition and increased production. But as Mark Ritchie argues, "By far the most serious impacts have been felt by the rice producers in the poorest countries of West Africa." Struggling Cameroonian peasants were forced out of farming by imports of Thai and U.S. rice, which was sold at nearly \$80 a ton below the local cost of production and \$140 a ton below U.S. cost of production.

Moving to a free international market would seriously destabilize a global food production system that is more fragile than many people realize. There are good reasons to eliminate export subsidies. The U.S. and the EEC have used such subsidies to dump their agricultural surpluses and drive down the world-market price. But the U.S. is most intent on dismantling agricultural stabilization and support systems worldwide.

**Toeing the hard line:** But U.S. agribusiness conservatives realize that farmers and their supporters in many countries are still potent politically. So Reagan aides pushed hard both domestically and internationally to "decouple" income support programs from production. Now farmers may receive loans and payments based on their crop yield and may be required to keep some land out of production. Most supply management strategies would even more closely "couple" regulation of production and guaranteed prices. Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter wants to use the GATT negotiations as a way to force "decoupling" on U.S. policy, even if it means postponing rewriting the 1990 farm bill until after the GATT talks are over.

For now, pragmatist Secretary of State James Baker and Trade Representative Carla Hills have tamed the right-wing hormones in favor of pushing the rest of the Bush agenda on trade. But Bush will try to gain through tactical maneuvering what Reagan's direct assault on food and agricultural security could not win. □



By Daniel Lazare

NEW YORK

**C**ALL IT THE EVOLUTION OF THE MYTH OF Mario Cuomo. In the beginning, there was a bright young lawyer in a place called Queens. He was humble (the son of Italian immigrants), honest (no small feat in that graft-ridden corner of New York), and religious (a portrait of Thomas More hung in his office). He was also a liberal who made a name for himself by helping to defuse resistance among middle-class homeowners to low-income housing. He ran for mayor in 1977 but lost, in part because he refused to abandon his long-

## POLITICS

standing opposition to the death penalty. In 1982, however, he was elected governor, and in 1984 he electrified the Democratic National Convention with a keynote address calling for "education, housing, peace" for all members of the great American family.

**Cuomo's supply slide:** But then, in 1989, a funny thing happened. While cutting taxes for the rich, the governor began slashing away at state expenditures for health, education and welfare. Liberals were beside themselves. Was Mario the Good suddenly turning into Cuomo the supply-side Scrooge? Not to worry, said his apologists. While the governor seemed to be cutting programs for the poor, he was in fact trying to drum up pressure to force the legislature to rescind an overly generous tax cut it passed two years earlier. Although he seemed to be hurting the poor, he was actually helping them by fighting in behalf of tax progressivity. It was just a tactic, part of the game. One had to have...faith.

So goes the myth, aimed obviously at buttressing Cuomo's reputation as the savior of the liberals. But the reality, as usual, is different. Although he originally criticized the tax cut as too large, he was eventually won over and now seems more concerned about the role of high taxes in contributing to a loss of high-paying financial jobs to New Jersey and Connecticut. Although not a believer in deficit spending, he agrees with supply-siders that high tax rates can be crippling.

"If your taxes are too high," he told an audience in Raleigh, N.C., last year, "you chase out the business, you have no wealth. Our wealth creation requires that we keep taxes down." In other words, don't kill the goose that lays the golden egg. If reducing the burden on those who generate the wealth—the rich—means increasing it on those whose only function is to soak it up—the poor—then, evidently, so be it.

The state budget crisis and the governor's response to it say a good deal about where Cuomo is heading as he enters the economically straitened '90s, the political trajectory of Democrats in general, and the enduring role of myth in liberal politics.

**Slicing the Big Apple:** To begin with, the cuts in Albany are not the minor year-to-year adjustments that political leaders routinely make, but deep and painful, the worst since the crisis years of the mid-'70s. If they go through, New York City alone stands to lose \$443 million, resulting in some 12,000 municipal layoffs, including 2,000 teachers and 800 street cleaners.

Medicaid recipients will have to pay for services that were previously free, and single adults who subsist on the state's home relief welfare program will have to get by with less. State-funded daycare and teenage pregnancy programs are also on the chopping block.



Gov. Mario Cuomo and Mayor Ed Koch at a Columbus Day parade in Manhattan.

# Cuomo and liberalism: the making of a myth

So is the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program for mothers and infants, which the governor himself singled out for praise last year when he declared "the Decade of the Child." As Cuomo himself admitted two weeks ago, AIDS-related spending is grossly inadequate even though the epidemic is currently accelerating as New York City's 200,000-plus drug addicts pass it on to their sexual partners and children.

"The city's health-care system is already strained to the breaking point, and yet we are just now heading into the worst years of the epidemic," said Dr. Mathilde Krim, founder of the American Foundation for AIDS Research. "We need strong city and state leadership and adequate funding now."

On the revenue side, Cuomo's budget maneuvers will likely worsen New York's already unfair tax structure. By shifting the cost of government programs to the counties and municipalities, the governor claims to be forcing those bloated entities to streamline. Yet inevitably the cost of public services will be borne less by state income taxes and more by local property taxes. This, in turn, places the burden more heavily on small property owners, who typically have a greater share of their income and wealth tied up in their homes.

Meanwhile, the income tax cut to which Cuomo remains officially tied will result in a savings of just \$91 for an average taxpayer earning \$36,000 a year, according to one study, but a savings of more than \$2,300 for one earning \$250,000. Even if the cut is rescinded or postponed, the state's network of liberal investment tax credits and other corporate deductions, in many cases more generous than the federal government's,

would remain unaltered. New York has allowed corporate taxes to fall from nearly 20 percent of total state revenues in the late '60s to less than 10 percent today. That drop is not only in keeping with the trend at the federal level, but it has actually outpaced it, according to Russell Sykes of the State Communities Aid Association, an Albany group.

**No comment:** Needless to say, a state marked by a deteriorating education and welfare system, garbage-strewn cities, and an accelerating AIDS epidemic is likely to be no

## Liberals go gaga over the governor, often overlooking his conservative ideology.

more economically competitive than one marked by high taxes. Nonetheless, New York's once-formidable liberal establishment has been notably silent.

While neoconservative Ed Koch has gone on the warpath, liberal David Dinkins, who recently declared for mayor, has barely uttered a peep. City Council member Ruth Messinger, who is supporting Dinkins and is running to take his place as Manhattan borough president, has criticized aspects of the plan as they affect New York City, but not the man behind it. Liberal columnists Jack Newfield of the *Daily News* and Jimmy Breslin of *Newsday* have blamed Koch for everything from crack to AIDS, but so far have had nothing to say about the horror show unfolding in Albany.

Why? Part of the reason, of course, is the simple reality of political power. As governor

and very possibly the Democratic presidential candidate in 1992, it's a lot better for an aspiring politician to have Cuomo on his or her side than as an enemy. There is also the mitigating circumstance of geography—the fact that Cuomo is far away in Albany, whereas Koch is all too close at hand in Manhattan.

Then there is the enduring power of myth. In Cuomo's case, the tendency toward mythification has been evident ever since the hard-fought 1977 mayoral campaign when, to heartfelt liberal applause, Cuomo refused to follow his opponent Koch in calling for return of the death penalty. The applause was not undeserved. But what liberals chose to ignore was that, simultaneously, Cuomo was following a low road of his own by engaging in repeated gay-baiting. He went out of his way, for instance, to refer to Koch as "a Greenwich Village bachelor" and pointedly advised voters that homosexuals should not be allowed to "proselytize" in the public schools—code language at the time for firing teachers who were gay.

**Closet conservative:** Liberals went similarly gaga over Cuomo's eloquent, deeply felt Catholicism because it suggested a politician could be both a progressive and a traditionalist, capable of moving the country forward without losing touch with those hallowed immigrant roots. Yet this ignored the equally deep-felt strain of conservatism in the governor's philosophy.

In 1983 the governor helped fan the hysteria over the downing of Korean Air Lines Flight 007 by refusing Andrei Gromyko's plane permission to land at Kennedy Airport. In 1985 he shocked editors and writers at the *Village Voice* by telling them he was "not too good" on Nicaragua and therefore preferred to "pass" on the issue of contra aid. During a 1987 visit to the Soviet Union he volunteered that a U.S.-Soviet conference in Moscow to assess both countries' human rights records might not be such a bad idea. But then, when warned against falling into the terrible heresy of "moral equivalence," he apologized and took it back. In 1988 he declared his support for President Reagan's "emergency" deployment of troops to Honduras in response to an alleged Sandinista incursion. (Honduras, with U.S. backing, had been sponsoring contra incursions into Nicaragua for years, but apparently that didn't count.)

Over the years Cuomo has also spoken out in favor of Star Wars research and the U.S. naval presence in the Persian Gulf. Closer to home, he has supported a "homeport" for nuclear-armed ships in New York Harbor and the Westway road construction boondoggle along Manhattan's West Side. His office has refused entreaties to legalize over-the-counter sales of hypodermic needles to slow the spread of AIDS among drug users, although he has seen fit to go along with a limited clean-needle program in New York City alone. Recently, he rejected a proposal to distribute condoms among state prisoners because sex in such facilities is against regulations. Better, therefore, that prisoners should contract AIDS than admit a breach of the rules.

Now he wants to slash social spending across the board in order to preserve a tax cut for the rich. Mario Cuomo doesn't act like a liberal and, in fact, hasn't called himself one in years. Yet because he occasionally makes noises like a progressive, those who do call themselves liberals treat him like a brother-in-arms. Can anyone explain the durability of this myth? □

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By Chris Norton

HOTEL TESORO BEACH, EL SALVADOR

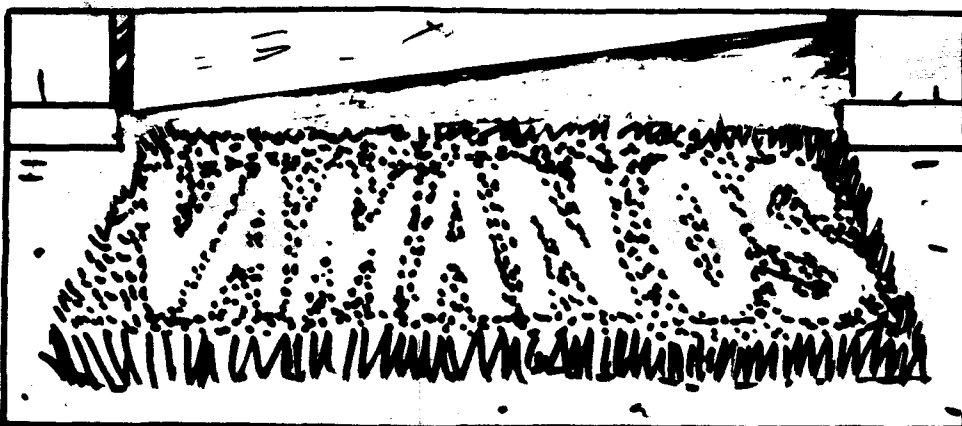
**T**HE FIVE CENTRAL AMERICAN PRESIDENTS, AT their summit meeting in this Salvadoran beachfront hotel, effectively killed the U.S.-backed Nicaraguan contras as a military force.

"In accord with the proposal of the president of Nicaragua and at the initiative of the president of Honduras," says the agreement, "the Central American presidents commit themselves to elaborating, in a period of no more than 90 days, a joint plan for the demobilization, repatriation or the voluntary relocation in Nicaragua and third countries of the members of the Nicaraguan Resistance and their families."

The surprise accord, signed February 14, went far beyond the agreement by the Central American foreign ministers in New York a week earlier to invite U.N. military observers merely to monitor the border areas, especially the Honduras-Nicaragua border from which the U.S.-financed contra army had launched most of its attacks.

The summit agreement is a major setback for the U.S., whose CIA created the contra army in Honduras in the early '80s to overthrow the leftist Nicaraguan government. While the contras have failed militarily, incurring major defeats and forfeiting their congressional funding, some U.S. policymakers had hoped to keep them sufficiently viable to at least harass and destabilize the Sandinistas. This decision by the Central American presidents will make any attempts to fund the contras, even with misnamed "humanitarian aid," very difficult.

The Nicaraguans were jubilant. The results of the summit far exceeded their expectations. "The contras are not just dead, they



## Opening the door wide for the contras' welcome exit

are buried," said Washington lawyer Paul Reichler, a key Sandinista adviser.

Surprisingly, the initiative to disband the contras came from Honduras, one of the

### NICARAGUA

closest U.S. allies in Central America. Honduran political and military leaders were well paid to allow the CIA-financed contras to operate out of their country. But as the contras have declined as a fighting force, Honduras has become increasingly worried about what it will do with these 10,000 heavily armed men on its territory.

**The contraction problem:** Honduras is in an embarrassing situation, since it officially denies that the contras are on its territory. Even after Honduras signed the Esquipulas II agreement in August 1987, which committed it to stop allowing the contras to

operate in the country, it nevertheless opposed visits by the monitoring groups to verify compliance. In December, however, Honduras called for a U.N. force to monitor its borders. And at their New York meeting the foreign ministers of the five Central American countries called on U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar to form a

### The Central American presidents' move will make U.S. attempts to fund the contras difficult.

monitoring force of unarmed military observers from Canada, West Germany and Spain.

In Caracas, at the inauguration of Venezuelan President Carlos Andres Perez earlier

this month, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega formally presented Honduran President José Azcona Hoyo with a proposal to repatriate the contras in a humane and generous manner, offering them land and agricultural credits. That proposal formed the base for the summit resolution that Honduras requested. "Esquipulas was Arias' meeting," says Reichler. "This one belongs to Ortega and Azcona."

"What this represents is nothing more or less than the solution to a problem that has afflicted Honduras for some time," said Honduran President Azcona Hoyo. "We hope that the U.S., just as it respected Esquipulas II...and has not approved more military aid for the contras, will respect the accord as it was written today."

The agreement to dismantle the contras puts the Bush administration on the spot at a time when it has yet to come up with fresh ideas on Central America or even to confirm a new assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs to replace Elliott Abrams, the designer of the Reagan administration's failed contra policy.

"As far as the contra wars are concerned, this is the last nail in the coffin," says one knowledgeable congressional source. "I don't see how the Bush administration can ask for, or Congress approve, any further arms for the contras given a border monitoring system and a plan for demobilizing them."

"This makes it difficult for the Bush administration to ask for humanitarian aid," says Bill Goodfellow of the liberal Washington, D.C.-based Center for International Policy, which has lobbied for the Arias peace plan. "It gives the Democrats the ammunition to ask for resettlement aid for the contras instead of so-called humanitarian aid to keep them alive as a military force."

Contra representatives defiantly warned that any agreement in which they aren't included will fail. Nevertheless, the Nicaraguan government appears to have no interest in further negotiations with the contras, whom they see as a spent force. "There's no reason in the world to talk to the contras," says Reichler. "They're not getting any more military aid from the U.S., and without it they are defeated as an army."

Reichler says that with the contra threat removed, the Nicaraguan government plans to move to greater internal democratization. President Ortega announced that presidential, legislative and municipal elections would be moved up from November 1990 to, at the latest, February 25, 1990.

Ortega also committed his government to end press restrictions and to open access to the government-controlled media to all the different political parties during the election campaign.

**On Salvador:** The presidents' meeting apparently didn't touch on the recent proposal by the Salvadoran rebels to participate in that country's elections if they were postponed until September. The summit was a homage of sorts to Salvadoran President Jose Napoleon Duarte, who is dying of stomach and liver cancer. Duarte made clear before the meeting that he opposed including the guerrilla proposal, which he has rejected as unconstitutional, on the summit's agenda. Opposition Salvadoran labor groups, however, held demonstrations calling for support for the guerrilla proposal.

Chris Norton is *In These Times*' correspondent in El Salvador.

## Ortega is thankful for "present"; hopeful that U.S. policy has changed

MANAGUA— "With this agreement we have given the *coup de grace* to the war," said a smiling Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega on his return Valentine's Day from the historic summit of the five Central American presidents who agreed at a beach resort in El Salvador to dismantle the contra army based in neighboring Honduras.

Ortega called the accord "the best present we could hope for on this *dia de enamorados*." In particular, Ortega found positive signs in the apparent readiness of President José Azcona Hoyo of Honduras to join in solving the problem of disarming and relocating the contra forces. Ensnared along the rugged border between the two countries, the U.S.-supported contras have become an increasingly thorny problem for the U.S.-backed Honduran government.

Since the August 1987 Esquipulas II peace initiative, not only has the administration changed in Washington but also the price of playing host to the contras has become too high for the Hondurans. Political violence is rising, including the machine-gon killing of a top contra commander that has been attributed to contra infighting. With elections approaching, the opposition has been generating anti-contra sentiment by voicing the fear that Honduras may become a new Lebanon, torn by violent political rivalries not of its own making. President Azcona evi-

dently believes that the time has come to relieve his land of the contras. He has gone so far as to state that the summit accord offers a convenient solution to a problem created by the U.S.

"Azcona's attitude showed what can result if the U.S. is off his back," said a foreign observer at the summit meeting. "Before, the State Department would take the Hondurans and Salvadorans aside and lean on them." That didn't happen this time.

Meanwhile, Nicaraguan President Ortega indicated that the change in Washington has opened a new chapter in Central America. "Nicaragua would not be taking the same actions if the U.S. was still pursuing the same old Reagan policy," he said during a TV panel discussion of the summit results. When asked what he thought Bush policy toward Nicaragua will be, Ortega responded, "The very fact Mr. Bush has not defined his policy is an indication that the policy itself has changed."

The "actions" in which Ortega referred include anti-inflationary cuts in military forces, diplomatic steps and the process known as *concertation*. This involves meetings between government and opposition business and political groups to discuss measures to handle the current economic crisis as well as political changes. These encounters have occurred frequently since late January.

But opposition leaders remain skeptical of the Sandinista approach and question the hefty publicity given to the *concertation* process in the pro-government press. Sandinista critics say the government is trying to convey the impression that great changes are underway when, in fact, nothing definitive has been decided.

"They have made many promises before; what we want to see now are concrete actions," said Guillermo Selva, first vice president of the Liberal Independent Party. The opposition will probably participate [in the elections], but only if the legal mechanisms exist for them to be truly free and fair."

Before traveling to El Salvador, Ortega did meet with 11 opposition parties to discuss various topics, especially the proposal to move up the national elections date. He agreed to reform laws regarding elections and press freedoms guaranteeing the opposition equal access to television and radio during the upcoming campaign. The opposition groups are still deciding whether the guarantees will be sufficient to ensure their participation.

Meanwhile, contra fighters in the base camps reportedly claim they can resume fighting if necessary. They also reserved the right to resist disarming until assured that the "democratization" steps in the Salvadoran agreement are carried out.

—William Gaspeni



By Diana Johnstone

**W**HILE WEST GERMANY HAS BEEN STICKING to its own ideas of East-West relations, resisting Anglo-American pressure for rapid nuclear missile modernization, the picture is different when it comes to North-South relations. The scandal surrounding German involvement in construction of a pharmaceuticals plant at Rabta in Libya, described by the U.S. as a "chemical weapons factory," has helped tighten U.S. control of its allies' perceptions and policies regarding nearby North Africa.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl's government issued its report on the Rabta affair on February 15. Prepared by his right-hand man Wolfgang Schäuble, the document chronicled the reports reaching the government about the nature of the Rabta plant and German participation in its construction. It included policy recommendations and the draft of a new and more stringent export law.

The media and opposition were less interested in the legal reform than in the questions that bring down governments: When did Kohl know? When did Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher know? Who was guilty of a cover-up?

The "when" questions aroused more curiosity than the "what" question. When they knew something, what did they know? For instance, does receiving a report from the West German Federal Intelligence Service (BND) to the effect that a "partner service" (perhaps the CIA) says Libya must be making chemical weapons really amount to "knowing" anything?

It seems likely that before the Rabta flap, officials in the Bonn government had their doubts. The uproar in the media and in the opposition is teaching them this lesson: Germany's image cannot afford to be linked with Libya, or with poison gas, or—worst of all—with Libyan poison gas. The precise facts of the matter are trivial compared to the overwhelming political damage of such an image.

The Kohl-Genscher government is being reproached for underestimating the potential political damage of the Libyan connection.

In the Bundestag debate on the Schäuble report, opposition leader Hans Jochen Vogel, chairman of the Social Democratic Party (SPD), more or less took up the "Auschwitz-in-the-Sands" accusations made in January by *New York Times* columnist William Safire. "Aid has gone from German soil to threaten other peoples with chemical weapons, including even the threat of a cruel death to the people of Israel," Vogel declared. By speaking of an anti-German campaign when he knew the facts were correct, Kohl had given an opportunity to certain Americans "to touch up the outdated image of the ugly German."

For the Greens, Angelika Beer accused the government of "silent help to mass murder." She accused the Bonn government of being ready "to deliver just about everything that kills to just about anybody."

To some extent, these attacks were motivated by the opposition's belief that it had the government on the run. In addition, there is a historically understandable strain of anti-nationalism in the post-Hitler German left that is ready to believe the worst of fellow Germans.

**Anatomy of a scandal:** The Schäuble document shows reports that Libya might be planning to make chemical weapons with German help had been coming in through

## Bad air around a report on chemical weapons



Kohl has paid dearly for a political underestimation.

the BND since 1980. But from the start the BND also noted that it might simply be a matter of "a normal chemical factory." The report notes that "mere suspicions" are not enough for legal proceedings.

Last May 18 the U.S. Embassy warned Bonn that it "understood" German firms had

### WEST GERMANY

helped provide equipment to Libya "for a probable chemical weapons facility." The small Imhausen Chemie company was mentioned. Then last October 18 BND reported that a "partner service" said that in August Imhausen employees had helped repair damage to production units of "the presumed chemical weapons plant" in Libya. On October 20 a first report was submitted to Kohl on these suspicions. In the days before Kohl and Genscher's post-election trip to Wash-

**Chancellor Helmut Kohl's government has issued its report on West German involvement in construction of a Libyan plant. The report indicates the German officials were skeptical about U.S. claims that the plant would produce chemical weapons.**

ington in mid-November, the U.S. became more insistent. Then Secretary of State George Shultz wrote a letter to Genscher warning that Rabta would be on the agenda. Genscher can't remember the letter and didn't tell Kohl. On November 15 Genscher and Kohl were briefed in the Watergate Hotel by Shultz and then CIA Director William Webster.

Kohl himself reported back to his security council that the problem was that "there is hardly any way to tell civilian products for the chemical industry from substances for chemical weapons."

The charges against Kohl and Genscher concern their motives for not "sounding all the alarms," as Vogel put it. The sometimes implicit, sometimes explicit accusation is that they were covering up for German "merchants of death" out of unlimited greed for German export profits. This seems unlikely. Genscher has worked too hard for a comprehensive chemical weapons ban, with support from the German Chemical Industry Association (which has expelled Imhausen), to turn around and protect chemical weaponry exports.

Rather, as can be gleaned from the Schäuble report, German officials were skeptical of the American charges, and the reports were too vague to overcome that skepticism.

There were reasons for that skepticism that scarcely anyone wants to discuss openly. On Feb. 5, 1986, a bomb exploded in a West Berlin discotheque called La Belle frequented by black American soldiers. A Turkish woman and an American soldier were killed. The U.S. blamed the bombing on Libya and used this alleged "Libyan ter-

rorist attack on Americans" as the pretext for the April 15, 1986, bombing of the Libyan capital.

Berlin police closed the La Belle case last December for lack of evidence. For a while police had held two Jordanians, with Syrian connections, but the charges against them fell through. There was never a shred of concrete evidence against Libya; indeed, there is no proof that Americans were the target of the bombing, which could have been linked to ordinary underworld crime. Nevertheless, most of the world believes Muammar Khadafy ordered the bombing, just as most of the world believes countless other charges of "Libyan terrorism" that have never been proved.

**Wedding bombs:** Back in 1986 American Ambassador to West Germany Richard Burt revealed the source of U.S. certitudes about the La Belle bombing: The National Security Administration (NSA) had tapped a telephone call between Libya and Berlin. The NSA taps just about every telephone conversation it wants to anywhere in the world. This gives the U.S. a tremendous advantage over everybody else in arguments of this sort: U.S. officials can always claim that they know everything, or at least more than everybody else, thanks to their "absolutely reliable sources"—the phrase for electronic spying.

While the U.S. has a monopoly on electronic intelligence, it does not have a monopoly on "intelligence" in the broader sense. The debate would come over the evaluation of the data, if that data were made public to the whole world. In the case of La Belle, it was disclosed that the incriminating conversation had been about plans for a marriage. The suspicious Khadafy-watchers concluded that "wedding" was a code word for "bombing." Some Europeans who were let in on that evidence were not at all convinced.

These people don't have to be reminded that the U.S. Navy, equipped with the most modern electronic detection equipment, shot down an Iranian airliner last year. The "worst case" bias of U.S. analysts is especially marked when a presumed "terrorist state" like Libya is being watched.

In short, the Germans had every reason to suspect that the Americans might be jumping to unwarranted conclusions. More to the point, they knew from experience that legal action requires more solid evidence than a conclusion drawn from a classified electronic bug.

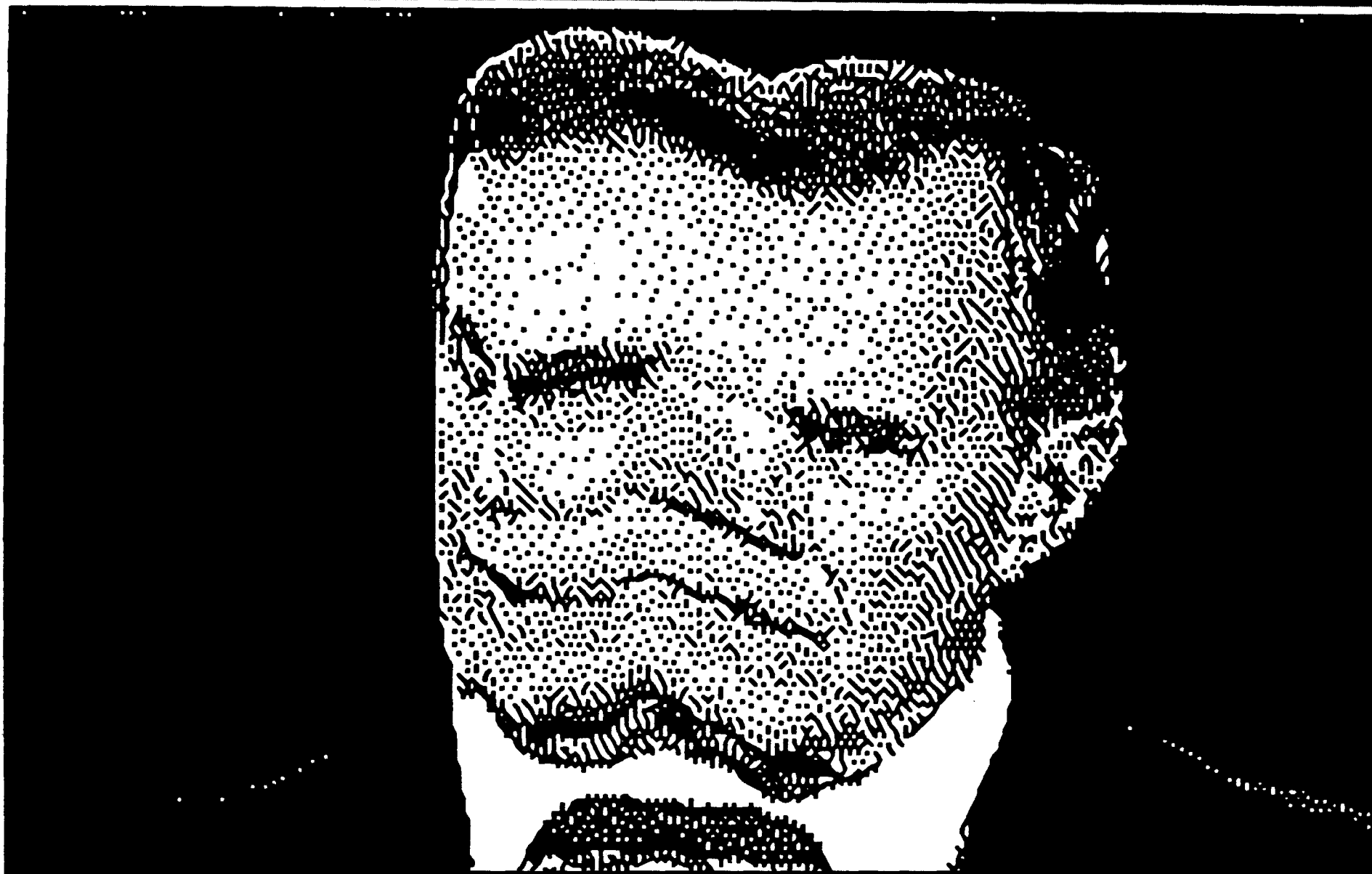
Another reason for failing to get excited is the widespread belief that Libya is not a particularly dangerous country, certainly not as dangerous as it is made out by the Americans, either to Israel or to anybody else. The Americans seemed to be shouting "Wolf!" again by calling Rabta "the biggest chemical weapons complex in the world." After visiting what Khadafy insists is a "pharmaceuticals plant," the Algerian foreign minister said condescendingly that "ours is three times bigger."

In October 1987 the West German Embassy in Tripoli reported to Bonn on Libya's disastrous retreat from Chad, pursued by American-backed Chadian forces clearly intent on invading Libya and overthrowing Khadafy. The embassy reported that German businessmen were saying that the Libyan military "is very aware that Libya is on the defensive. They are hoping now for a miracle weapon. This means poison gas. Preparations are being made...with the help of Western firms."

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# BUSH

Call him a Will Rogers with a loose lariat or an H.L. Mencken whose cigar has gone out. The fact is that George Herbert Walker Bush brings the kind of wit and wisdom to politics that Americans haven't experienced since Chicago's Mayor Daley passed from the scene.

The new president, it has been said, suffers from an education better than his brain. This has given him a special way with words ever since the halcyon days of his prep-hood back in the '30s when, in his phrase, Americans enjoyed a "kitchen in every pot."

In their inspiring new book, **The Wit and Wisdom of George Bush** (St. Martin's Press), Ken Brady and Jeremy Solomon have collected some of the president's most telling utterances. **In These Times** is publishing a selection of these because we believe, in the words of George Bush, that they contain messages of intelligence and compassion "to which the world expires."

So goodbye to Ronnie and his Hollywood props and hello to George and his Down East malaprops.

★ ★

"I'm looking introvertedly, and I don't like what I see." —Statement after losing the 1970 election to Lloyd Bentsen for a U.S. Senate seat in Texas.

★ ★

"It's no exaggeration to say the undecideds could go one way or another." —Discussing the voters during the 1988 campaign.

★ ★

"For seven-and-a-half years I have worked alongside him [Ronald Reagan], and I am proud to be his partner. We have had triumphs, we have made mistakes, we have had sex." —Describing his relationship with former President Reagan at a Republican rally, May 1988, in Twin Falls, Idaho.

★ ★

"Boy, they were big on crematoriums, weren't they?" —Comment during his tour of the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz in September 1987.

★ ★

"I hope I stand for anti-bigotry, anti-Semitism, anti-racism. That is what drives me. That is one thing I feel very, very strongly about." —Ex-

pressing his opposition to discrimination at a campaign rally in Columbus, Ohio, September 1988.

★ ★

"...make sure that everybody who has a job wants a job." —Announcing the top goal of his presidency.

★ ★

"I'm for Mr. Reagan—blindly." —As vice president, responding to questions about his own views on the issues.

★ ★

"I've brought my brains along, let's listen to him." —Introducing his aide in National Security Council meetings in 1975, when Bush was chief of the CIA.

★ ★

"Inarticulate as though I may be." —Boasting to reporters during the 1988 campaign that he controls the content of his speeches.

★ ★

"I kind of think I'm a scintillating kind of fellow. I think I'm a charismatic son of a gun." —Speaking to reporters in May 1988.

★ ★

"Those are two hyporhetorical questions." —From his Sept. 25, 1988,



debate with Michael Dukakis.

★ ★

"Yeah, I think there's some social changes going on.... AIDS, for example, uh, is a, is a, uh, disease for, disease of poverty in a sense. It's where the hopelessness is. It's bigger than that, of course." -In reply to a question about why people use drugs.

★ ★

"Not with the idea of going back and killing off the fish or something, but seeing if we can't find the balance." -When asked if, as president, he would relax environmental regulations regarding auto emissions.

★ ★

"I'd like to see us open up that Alaska refuge, and that is important, because it was said once, remember when they built the pipeline, 'Don't build the pipeline, you get rid of the caribou.' The caribou love it. They rub up against it, and they have babies. There are more caribou in Alaska than you can shake a stick at." -Discussing the Alaskan pipeline at a GOP dinner in Nashua, N.H., in 1988.

★ ★

"The attempt to tear down our president's leadership with the knowledge of the issues has not failed." -On the effectiveness of Walter Mondale's attacks on Reagan during the 1984 campaign.

★ ★

"We're No. 1, and there's a lot of idiots don't know that." -In Parsippany, N.J., on the general state of the country.

★ ★

"It's the only memorable thing I've ever said, and I've regretted saying it." -On his 1980 characterization of Reagan's economic proposals as "voodoo economics."

★ ★

While reciting the Pledge of Allegiance at a Flag City, U.S.A., celebration in Findlay, Ohio, Bush said "liberty" instead of "republic," "freedom and justice" instead of "liberty and justice" and omitted the word "indivisible" from the pledge. An aide said later that Bush had rendered an interpretation of the pledge.

★ ★

"But—and I—look, mental—that was a little overstated—I'd say about 30 percent." -Clarifying an earlier statement that most of the nation's homeless are mentally ill.

★ ★

"I was shot down, and I was floating around in a little yellow raft setting a record for paddling. I thought of my family, my mom and dad, and the strength I got from them. I thought of my faith, the separation of church and state." -Relating his experiences and thoughts as a fighter pilot in World War II when he was shot down in the Pacific; at the Old Creamery Theater, Garrison, Iowa, December 1987.

★ ★

"I have a tendency to avoid on and on and on, eloquent pleas. I don't talk much, but I believe, maybe not articulate much, but I feel." -To reporters in New Hampshire, February 1988, using vintage Bushspeak to explain his tendency to lapse into Bushspeak.

★ ★

"We had last night, last night we had a couple of our grandchildren with us in Kansas City—six-year-old twins, one of them went as a package of Juicy Fruit, arms sticking out of the pack, the other was Dracula. A big rally there. And Dracula's wig fell off in the middle of my speech, and I got to thinking, watching those kids, and I said if I could look back and I had been president for four years: What would you like to do? Those young kids here. And I'd love to be able to say that working with our allies, working with the Soviets, I'd found a way to ban chemical and biological weapons from the face of the Earth." -Discussing a 1988 Halloween night rally in Missouri.

★ ★

"Now because of a lot of smoke and frenzying of bluefish out there, going after a drop of blood in the water, nobody knows that." -Complaining that his running mate Dan Quayle was not getting credit for being the author of the Job Training Partnership Act.

★ ★

"And you know, you look at the amount of people re-committing crimes with a gun—I looked up the gun registration, which I oppose. I went down—I told you or you heard me say this: But I had the guy doing up a file today." -Clarifying his position on gun control.

★ ★

"This isn't any signal. It's a direct statement. If it's a signal, fine." -Regarding his remarks that Gerald Ford should not enter the presidential race in 1980 and that the time for a Ford presidency had passed.

★ ★

"I don't know whether your history teaches you back into the early days of the Korean War and that kind of thing, but there was an old tough guy named Yakov Malik at the U.N., and I was the U.N. ambassador then—I started dealing with the Soviets about then—1971, 1972." -History lesson delivered to Hopkinton High School in New Hampshire.

★ ★

"The slide show is over." -Attempting to tell a 1988 campaign audience that he and Reagan had halted the nation's economic decline, that is, "the slide is over."

★ ★

"He would have been in deep doo-doo." -In 1986 when asked what would happen to a Chinese official who became too friendly with Americans.

★ ★

"Oh, yes. They gave me a boy to play tennis with." -When asked,

after returning from China in 1975, whether he had met any of the Chinese people.

★ ★

"I need combat pay for last night, I'll tell you. You know, it's Tension City when you're in there." And later the same day he added, "The bastard didn't lay a glove on me.... That guy makes Leslie Stahl look like a pussy." -Commenting, the day after, on his famous interview with CBS News anchor Dan Rather in January 1988.

★ ★

During the vice-presidential debate with Geraldine Ferraro, Bush accused Walter Mondale of saying the U.S. Marines in Lebanon had died in shame. Mondale, who had actually said the U.S. had been humiliated in Lebanon, strenuously denied Bush's accusation. After Bush refused to retract his remark, Mondale said, "George Bush doesn't have the manhood to apologize." Asked to respond to Mondale's challenge, Bush replied, "I'll lay my record on manhood against Mondale's any time."

★ ★

"We can now break the back of inflation, and we can increase employment. We are pessimistic." -Enthusiastically explaining his economic program during a GOP debate in New Hampshire in 1980.

★ ★

"Do I favor mandatory crimes for people who are creating a crime with a gun? Yes—I mean mandatory sentencing." -Outlining his "get tough" approach to crime.

★ ★

"I believe in unions. I believe in non-unions." -Responding to a question on his views on organized labor while touring a non-union furniture factory in North Carolina.

★ ★

"I haven't selected her. But let me tell you, this gender thing is history. You're looking at a guy who sat down with Margaret Thatcher across the table and talked about serious issues." -Responding to questions about who his running mate would be in the 1988 campaign.

★ ★

"The whole ethnic thing in our country, the pride we take in where we came from and what we are and neighborhood, all these kinds of things, is not possible in China." -Text of a stock campaign speech from Bush's 1980 presidential bid.

★ ★

"Did you come here and say, 'The heck with it, I don't need this darn thing?' Did you go through that withdrawal thing?" -To a recovering drug addict at a Newark, N.J., drug clinic.

★ ★

"Oh, the vision thing." -Response to a friend's suggestion that he spend a few days alone to think about what he proposed to do as president.

★ ★

"Your dedication and tireless work with the hostage thing...." -Handwritten note to Oliver North praising his efforts to release American hostages in Lebanon.

★ ★

"We love your adherence to democratic principles and democratic processes." -A toast made for then Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos at a 1981 inaugural ball in Manila.

★ ★

"I'll repeat it and stand by it.... We should judge by the record." -Response at a news conference in Honolulu to questions about his toast to Marcos.

★ ★

Efforts by Congress to cut off aid to the Nicaraguan contras "pulls the plug out from under the president of the United States." -Comment during the 1988 presidential race.

★ ★

"Under the very guise of the Soviet Union." -Discussing how Poland has been able to expand its freedoms.

★ ★

"Tell me, general, how dead is the Dead Sea?" -To Jordanian Army Chief of Staff Gen. Zeid Bin Shaker.

★ ★

"Nobody has to say it's a tremendous 100,000 percent success." -Defending Reagan's Mideast policy and commenting on the terrorist car bomb that killed more than 250 U.S. Marines in Beirut.

★ ★

"America's freedom is the example to which the world expires." -At a campaign speech in Detroit, October 1988.

★ ★

"I'm going to be so much better a president for having been at the CIA that you're not going to believe it." -During the 1980 primary season.

★ ★

"I have absolutely total confidence as to his integrity." -Commenting on Richard Nixon during the height of Watergate.

★ ★

"I just have to be vague about the answer, but I certainly emphathize with the problem." -In answer to a question in Iowa about the politically sensitive "notch baby" problem, in which people born between 1917 and 1921 are denied full Social Security benefits.

★ ★

"If I have a tendency, and I confess to it, to avoid going on and on with great eloquent statements of belief." -Attempting to explain Bushspeak.

★ ★

But Bush may have summed it up best in a moment of masterly understatement when he told Randall Rothenburg, editor of the *New York Times Magazine*, "I am not your basic intellectual."

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# EDITORIAL

## IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"



CAN LEE COME OUT TO PLAY?

## Lee Atwater grapples with his Frankenstein

David Duke's election two weeks ago to a seat in the Louisiana legislature (see story on page 5) has caused consternation and embarrassment in high Republican circles. Duke, as everyone knows by now, is a former grand wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, the most blatantly racist and unabashedly violent of far-right fringe groups. Now, as head of the National Association for the Advancement of White People, he claims to have repudiated the Klan and its propensity for violence, but the Klan's phone number and Duke's are still one and the same.

Republicans hoping to win middle-class blacks to their banner are now in a pickle. For years—ever since Richard Nixon initiated his Southern strategy in 1968—the GOP has done its best to win over white racists. Ronald Reagan's election successes owed a lot to his appeals to the prejudices of whites, couched in attacks on welfare queens and appeals to states' rights doctrines. And George Bush's campaign revolved around TV commercials about Willie Horton, the Massachusetts black who raped a white woman while on furlough from prison.

It should therefore be no surprise that the Southerners flocking to the Republican Party in the South are strong advocates of keeping blacks in what once was their place. Nor should it be a surprise that having been primed by the Bush campaign's Willie Horton ads, they find nothing untoward in electing a former Klan leader who speaks the party's lingo.

But the Klan is bad for public relations, and it's poison even to conservative African-Americans. That's why Republican Party National Chairman Lee Atwater has frantically been trying to disown Duke. Atwater loved the hardball Willie Horton ads during the campaign, but the new Republican line is "kinder and gentler" at center stage. It's all so shameless that even the conservative *Chicago Tribune* finds Atwater's fake outrage too much to take. "If you sow a Willie Horton ad, you may reap a David Duke," the *Tribune* says. And who except a loyal Bush man could argue with that? The Republicans courted the David Dukes of this world. It would be better for them to acknowledge their responsibility, perhaps even to repent, than to throw Duke out of the party in which he belongs.

Atwater will have none of this. "David Duke is not a Republican, as far as I'm concerned," he says. "He is a pretender, a charlatan and a political opportunist who is looking for any organization he can find to legitimate his views of racial and religious intolerance and bigotry." Maybe so, but at least he went to the right place.

Indeed, Atwater's counterfeit outrage would be more convincing if John Treen—Duke's opponent in the Louisiana election—had not done his best to outdo Duke in racist appeals during the campaign. On the issues Duke and Treen were two of a kind. (See *In These Times*, February 15) The main thing that distinguished Treen from Duke was his support from on high. President Bush sent a letter endorsing him. Ronald Reagan did a radio commercial for him. These worthies wanted to have it both ways. They wanted to avoid the bad press a Duke victory would generate, while sticking with their racist strategy.

Why, then, did Duke win? Why, if Treen was saying the same thing and the biggies from Washington and Baton Rouge were leaning on the voters, did they choose Duke? Apparently because Duke also represented anti-establishment sentiment. As one Duke supporter said after the election, what the politicians and media people "don't understand is that people here have had things stuffed down their throats for a long time. This was our way of getting back at them." There is a good deal of racist sentiment in this, but it is also an expression of powerlessness, of frustration in the face of economic depression in the area and of hostility to the corporate and political powers that be. It's too bad that in politics only right wingers take advantage of these sentiments.

## Homeless wait for house that Jack might build

One of the more substantial differences between the Reagan and Bush administrations is likely to be seen in Housing and Urban Development policies. With conservative free marketeer Jack Kemp now secretary of HUD, the agency is already more visible and active than it was under his predecessor. And Kemp, who has his own presidential ambitions, is sure to seek the limelight. To succeed he must have some success in alleviating the housing crisis, and he's off to a promising start by saying that if savings and loan institutions are to be bailed out by the federal government, "there should be some commitment" to finance inner-city housing.

"I'm glad to hear that," said Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez (D-TX), chairman of the House Committee on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs. "That's exactly what we're working on." Another idea that Gonzalez has been discussing with Treasury officials is to use repossessed properties owned by savings and loans for public housing, though this has not yet been tied to the S&L rescue package.

Both of these are good ideas, as far as they go. But they are merely nibbling at the edges of the housing crisis. If Kemp is going to make a name for himself, he'll have to do a lot more.

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# LETTERS

## In extremis?

I HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY DISAPPOINTED IN THE quality of your publication and its extreme biases. From your promotion campaign, I was hoping to find one newspaper with intelligent, objective information. Unfortunately, most issues contain only a limited amount of accurate, well-written and researched information and a vast majority of biased, subjective and overly opinionated reporting.

This reflects the same quality and mediocrity that most Americans are subjected to in the media today. I will keep searching for that light in the darkness called unbiased, accurate, self-actualized news reporting.

Liberalism, if left to the devices of small minds (meaning narrow in scope) can be just as dangerous as the small minds of the ultraconservatives. I value wisdom and looking at both sides of a situation, then evaluating accurately and sensitively.

One prime example of your bias is reflected in your obviously distorted and sensational reporting of the difficult and painfully complex Arab-Israeli conflict. Your lack of historical context, sensitivity and accuracy in reporting about both sides—Israeli and Arab internal struggles—is shocking. Your Arab bias (especially your tabloid-style photos and advertisements) was disappointing. Are you open-minded and liberal enough to interview the Israelis who painfully struggle with the survival of both their country and daily existence—who want solutions, but not at the cost of suicide and deception? Have you interviewed members of the organization Families of Victims of Arab Terrorism as thoroughly as you have the unfortunate Arab families? From your reporting, I think not. You seem to relish mediocrity, simplistic judgments and incredible distortions to fit into your small-minded view of history and the world.

Sondra Bien Shamburg

## No

I WOULD JUST LIKE TO EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION to *In These Times* for its fine and courageous coverage of the *intifada* and the entire Palestinian-Israeli dispute. To its shame, few of the American leftist journals have dealt with this issue in an honest, unflinching and consistent manner. South America and South Africa are safer and less complex areas of the world where the American left does not have to confront the ugly historical, political and human truths which are so apparent when one closely examines the issue of Palestine. I am glad that *In These Times* has taken the bold editorial and moral decision to speak out against the continued violent repression of the Palestinian people.

Michael Browne  
New York

## Capital error

LET ANYONE ASSOCIATE ME WITH THE HEADLINES over my sidebar about Israeli treatment of Palestinian prisoners, I disclaim responsibility.

Not a single nation besides Israel recognizes Jerusalem as Israel's capital, although the stupid mainline press often implies it is so.

For the record, Jerusalem is not the capital of Israel, and not even your headline

writer can make it so. The venerable city's future status remains to be determined by an international peace conference.

Mitchell Kaidy  
Rochester, N.Y.

**Editor's note:** The headline in question, "Jerusalem observes tory law," was, we thought, a self-evident play on words rather than a geographic expression.

## Missed metaphor

NOTING THAT BUSH APPOINTEES CREATE "A KINDA *Ngentiler* administration," the editorial of February 8 adds: "Of course, it's not just Jews, but also women and minorities who are receiving scant or token representation in the new administration." By any statistical definition I can imagine, Jews are a minority in the U.S.

Steven G. Kellman  
San Antonio, Texas

## Reparations

SALIM MUWAKKIL DOES HIS USUAL FIRST-RATE job reporting on African-American issues, but some of the subjects of his interviews have wacky ideas.

Maulana Karenga (*ITT*, Jan. 18), for example, insists that "Europeans are guilty of our [African] debasement.... [Blacks] must...make white Americans understand that we still hold them responsible." These theorists argue that almost 250 years of slavery and 100 years of Jim Crow "culturally ravaged and economically dispossessed" black Americans. These theorists are attempting to craft arguments to legitimate claims for reparations.

Never has a more unwise idea been put forth in the history of U.S. race relations! European-Americans have more than fully atoned for the sins of slavery and segregation. Half a million Americans—mostly European-Americans—were sacrificed in the American Civil War in atonement for the sin of slavery. The Confederacy was ground under the decade-long heel of a corrupt and brutal occupation during Reconstruction; slaveholders suffered confiscation of their properties and Confederates suspension of their rights.

As *ITT* pointed out (Sept. 16, 1987), during the Civil War most Northerners thought Union victory would mean repatriation of the Negro race to Africa. But within a few years the former slaves had been granted full U.S. citizenship and rights. Republican leader James G. Blaine commented that before the Civil War only "the wildest fancy

of a distempered brain" could have envisioned a law extending to blacks "all the civil rights pertaining to a white man"; yet within a few years it was done! The 14th and 15th Amendments granting citizenship and rights to African-Americans are full and complete compensation for all the cultural ravages and economic dispossessions of slavery, etc.

For those who do not understand how citizenship can be payment in full for these wrongs, I would encourage a visit to Ellis Island. If they still don't understand, perhaps a little trip to the U.S.-Mexico border will help. Latin American refugees will be happy to explain. (Some would believe they are fleeing U.S.-sponsored aggression in their countries as opposed to being economic refugees coming hither to make a better life for themselves. This would be sort of like fleeing danger by running toward it, as in fleeing a fire by running into the burning building!) The U.S. accepts more legal immigrants than all other countries combined! They clamor to come here because the U.S. offers the golden key of opportunity. The U.S. could have repatriated the former slaves, but did not, giving them instead the most prized of possessions—U.S. citizenship. Emancipated slaves could have demanded repatriation, but did not.

Advocates for African-Americans have to realize the dangers of calling for reparations. Since the only way reparations would have made sense historically is in a context of repatriation, racists and others convinced that the descendants of Negro slaves cannot succeed under the rules of the game that have worked for all other ethnic groups, including black immigrants from Jamaica and Africa, may be only too willing to go along with reparations, and insist on surrender of citizenship and return to ancestral lands.

Meanwhile, I thank Martin Luther King Jr. and Jesse Jackson for preaching progressive, forward-looking, forgiving, not fault-finding, doctrines of universal humanity, hard work and self-improvement, and for helping us put behind us the ugly past in which so many of us had no part, so we can go forward together as Americans.

Dino Joseph Drudi  
Washington, D.C.

## What is "public"?

I'VE JUST FINISHED STAUGHTON LYND'S INFORMATIVE book review on the de-steeling of the U.S. (*ITT*, Feb. 1). His concluding sentence, calling for public ownership of the steel industry, is disturbing.

It is a safe assumption that most of *In*

*These Times*' readers desire a society that is primarily or completely a worker-controlled democracy. After all, most of the people are workers. There is no question that this goal requires an end to "capitalist ownership and control of the means of production." But we should not simply equate this change with the transfer of ownership to "the public," as Lynd and countless others of us often do.

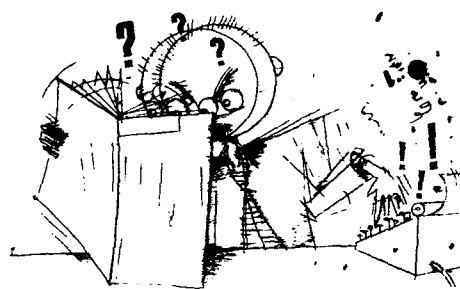
Private cooperative ownership by the workers is an acceptable alternative to capitalist ownership. In many situations, it may be preferable to public ownership. Defining a proper role for the state, which is just as important as the withering of the capitalist class, will not be accomplished by conveying title to the steel industry (or any other) to the government.

Yes, the state may have to intervene to protect the interests of the general consuming and working public and the future worker-owners of the steel industry. This does not require state or public ownership.

The distinction between worker ownership and public ownership is not a trivial one. The difficulties of the state-owned socialist economies is ample evidence of this fact. By confusing all private ownership with capitalist ownership, by confusing the injustices of the capitalist domination of the labor marketplace with all marketplaces and, finally, by equating the state and the party with the people, the socialist movement has allowed its ideal of freedom and power for everyone to stagnate.

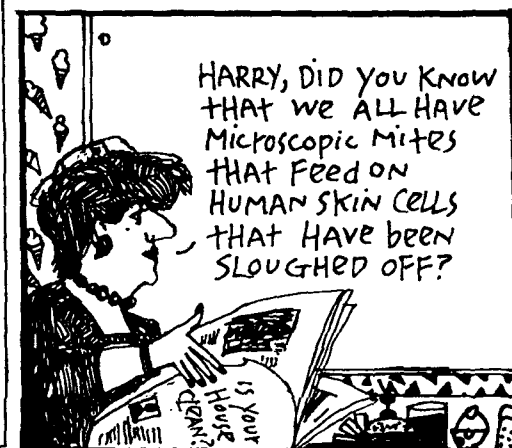
Many of us have thought long and hard about the evils of the present capitalist hegemony over the means of production. We should not flinch from considering and confronting the shortcomings of a system of "public ownership" in which the state becomes the owner of everything, including the power of the workers. If we fail to do so, our dream may become a nightmare.

Bob Sarnoff  
Los Angeles



Editor's note: Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

## SYLVIA



## by Nicole Hollander





## The Ninth Circle: All Booked Up

Those foolhardy souls still peering up at the night sky awaiting a new dawn in the form of the Bush administration might care to ponder the president's announcement that Reaganesque tradition will be continued on almost all relevant fronts, including aid to the Nicaraguan contras and to Jonas Savimbi's Unita force in Angola.

The possible appointment of Bernard Aronson as Elliott Abrams' successor shows that the familiar old strategy of wooing, by using Cold War Democrats, is still operational. The continued support for Savimbi sends a reassuring signal to South Africa. As Victoria Brittain recently pointed out in *New Left Review*, no target area of recent U.S. intervention—Central America, the Middle East, Kampuchea or Afghanistan—has paid such a horrifying price as southern Africa. Merely for its responsibility in this part of the world, the Reagan-Bush gang would spend eternity in the lowest circle of Inferno.

On Britain's calculation, U.S.-sponsored or -sanctioned destabilization in this region cost the victim nations—between 1980 and 1986—more than \$30 billion, which is twice the combined total of foreign aid received by the nine countries in the southern African Development Coordinating Council in that period. Of these countries, six are among the 25 poorest in the world.

The barbarities of the U.S. and South Africa-supported Renamo movement afflicting Mozambique forced 800,000 to flee. Over the years Unita and its leader Savimbi, long a hero to the American right, have caused half a million within Angola to become internal refugees. The U.N. says that a million people in Angola—half the urban population—need food and health aid. One child in four dies before its fifth birthday, and the streets are filled with people hobbling on crutches from the anti-personnel mines sown by the gallant warriors of Unita.

Through the 14 years since its independence, Angola has not been recognized by the U.S., which has inflicted on it the same horrors as upon Vietnam. Bush proposes to continue as before.

## Pregnant Hinge Department

"Why should the poor be flattered? No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp,

# ASHES & DIAMONDS

By Alexander Cockburn



Jonas Savimbi and friend

And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee."

—Hamlet

The Osric Award for the most servile journalism of recent memory (memory, that is, of the carousing rabble assembled last week in Washington, D.C., at Moe and Joe's restaurant—with a memory span of fairly small reach) was, as usual, hotly contested.

Some urged the prize go to Morton Kondracke of the *New Republic*, who reported to that periodical's rapidly dwindling readership that after only two weeks in office Vice President Dan Quayle has grown marvelously in maturity and judgment.

Others hailed Bob Woodward of the *Washington Post*. In the midst of Defense Secretary-designate John Tower's agonies during his confirmation hearings on Capitol Hill, Woodward concluded in the *Post* that the festive Tower, pockets bulging with corporate largesse, was a man of unimpeachable integrity. Tower was a useful source for

Woodward in the days of the Tower Commission, which, as you may recall, found nothing reprehensible in the comportment of Vice President George Bush during the years of the Iran-contra scandal. One of Tower's colleagues on the commission was Brent Scowcroft, now the president's national security adviser, which shows that Bush, like Woodward, knows how to say thank you.

Of course, Charles Krauthammer had his fans, who cited Krauthammer's syndicated column applause for Aronson as "An AFL-CIO Democrat: a liberal whose clear head does not turn to mush when contemplating Third World agrarian reformers.... Aronson, right from the start, is right for the job."

In the end the prize went to David Broder of the *Washington Post*, often described as the dean of the nation's political correspondents. In his speech nominating Broder, Simon Hoggart of the *London Observer* cited Broder's speech at the National Press Club last fall when receiving a prize for lifetime service to journalism. This virtuoso cozenor for the powerful said at the time, "I can't for the life of me fathom why any journalists would want to become insiders, when it's so damn much fun being outsiders—irreverent, inquisitive, incorrigibly independent outsiders, thumbing our nose at authority and going our way." Broder addressed these observations to massed ranks of insiders, including James Baker, now secretary of state, about whom he then composed a flattering profile.

## No One Called

Almost any act of violence in which Arabs might be involved in the Middle East brings immediate calls to the State Department from reporters asking whether the PLO is now deemed to have resorted to terror, and whether the U.S. will therefore rescind former Secretary of State George Shultz's decision to lift the ban on U.S.-PLO dialogue. The calls were especially fierce when a garbled news account made it appear that Yassir Arafat was directly threatening West Bank Mayor Frej.

So when Ariel Sharon, on several occasions, publicly called for Israelis to assassinate Arafat, the State Department prepared a statement on the U.S. attitude to such calls to terror, expecting calls from the press. The statement went unused. No one called.

## Minds of Mass Murder

The Israeli military has been using dogs carrying explosives and grenades that can be detonated by remote control. The last known use of this canine commando was in southern Lebanon, at which point the surviving German shepherds were sent to Armenia to sniff out earthquake victims. Readers have been supplying interesting accounts of militarization of animals. In World War II a mad dentist from Pennsylvania called Lytle Adams persuaded the White House and top Navy brass to recruit bats to fight against the Axis powers. The story was entertainingly laid out by Tom Denyer in *The Bandera Bulletin* for July 30, 1987.

Adams' dream was eagerly pursued by

the Navy, Army Air Corps and the Army's Chemical Warfare Service. The Navy leased the bat caves in late 1943 and commenced "Project X-ray." Wire nets strung across the cave mouth would trap bats, which would then be crated up, trucked off to a military installation and chilled into hibernation.

A napalm device, devised by the Harvard chemistry department and called a "Harvard-Style Delay Pencil," would then be fastened to the wing of each bat, said pencil being an inch in diameter, two-and-a-quarter inches long and eleven grams in weight, same as its carrier. Deployment would take the form of loading bats into cartons, 1,800 bats to the carton. At this point the bat would be armed by having its Harvard-style pencil injected with a salt solution which would take 24 hours to dissolve a steel wire, which would release a spring, which would duly ignite an ampule of napalm. Each carton would then be warmed enough to get the bats awake and parachuted over Japanese cities, decanting its cargo. Escaping bats would first roost (upside down, presumably, in approved bat posture) and then roast in thousands of individual little bat sats, causing in the wooden Japanese cities holocaust of a sort more efficiently engineered by the post-bat faction working in Oak Ridge and Los Alamos.

The bats weren't much good, being hard to hibernate and even harder to wake up. The Harvard-style pencil was too unwieldy. A bat bomb destroyed the hangars and outbuildings at Biggs Field near El Paso, further discouraging the bat men. Adams had wanted to released 10,000 armed bats in the southern California desert, but a sensible Marine lieutenant named Charles Holt said he would stop this, even if he had to stand in front of the arsenal with a machine gun. In the end the Navy had to content itself with building a Japanese-style village in Utah and burning it down with the Harvard-style pencils, sans bats. Project X-ray was canceled in 1944 because of "uncertainties." All this is small-time looniness of course, though indicative of the mindset of mass murder. After the recent conferences in Moscow on the Cuban missile crisis, the press was full of discussion of Kennedy's determination to finish off Castro by October 1962 and the consequent dispatch of Soviet missiles to Cuba. One of the aims of get-togethers such as the one in Moscow was to give a fresh airing to near misses of the past in the hope of learning therefrom. Next time they might look at the Quemoy and Matsu crisis of 1958.

Recently declassified British archives disclose that Prime Minister Harold Macmillan warned Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, "We may be on the edge of operations which could be the prelude to a third world war." Dulles, reacting to Chinese shelling of the Nationalist-held islands, had told him that "if the U.S. did have to intervene, they would probably have to use some small atomic weapons. This is an unpleasant prospect, but one we must face up to."

Macmillan sent his foreign secretary, Selwyn Lloyd, to Washington in further attempts to defer global conflict. According to David Leigh's account of the archival material in *The Observer*, January 1, Dulles was still threatening "ground bursts" of nuclear weapons, though "realizing the danger of radioactivity," if conventional weapons or nuclear air bursts did not do the trick. Eisenhower finally said nukes would be saved for "the big thing" and lamented that the crisis had put him off his golf game.

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# VIEWPOINT

By John Atlas & Peter Dreier

**N**OW THAT JACK KEMP IS SECRETARY OF housing and urban development (HUD), will the right-wing assault on government housing programs be elevated to a holy war? During a period of rising homelessness and declining homeownership, will Bush and Kemp continue the Reagan slash-and-burn housing policy?

Much depends on whether Kemp chooses to cement his ideological alliance with conservative soulmates (including his friends at the Heritage Foundation) or to broaden his political following for a future presidential campaign by developing a pragmatic agenda to build affordable housing and revitalize inner cities. One early indication of Kemp's choice will be how he responds to pressure from the real estate industry, right-wing think tanks and conservatives in Congress to wage a war against rent control.

**Housing in crisis:** A recent study by the Harvard Center for Housing Studies found that rents are now at their highest level in two decades. It is therefore no surprise that the demand for rent control has intensified and is likely to broaden in the future.

Rent control is a scapegoat for the nation's housing ills and the failure of Reagan's free-market housing policies. Yet the debate over rent control could be a key factor in shaping housing policy into the '90s, and is likely to deflect more serious discussion about solving the nation's housing crisis.

With homelessness on the rise and the political demand for rent control accelerating, the Heritage Foundation recently unveiled a study that concludes that rent control actually causes homelessness. The report, prepared by right-wing journalist William Tucker, is part of the conservative movement's ongoing attack on rent control as both an unwarranted government interference with private property rights and a misguided effort to preserve affordable housing. The study is designed to convince Kemp to cut off federal housing funds to communities—such as New York, Boston, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Newark and Washington, D.C.—that have adopted rent control.

Tucker's Heritage Foundation study is only part of the anti-rent-control arsenal developed by the real estate industry, right-wing think tanks and conservative politicians. Beginning in the late '70s as a brush-fire battle in scattered municipalities, it has escalated into a full-fledged war effort with headquarters in Washington.

During the '70s about 200 cities adopted some form of rent control. During that decade, tenant and real estate groups battled at the local level. Landlords and their allies poured millions of dollars to pass referenda or enact legislation to stem the tide of municipally sanctioned rent limits. But the battle ended in a stalemate.

During the '80s tenants were unable to adopt rent control in many new cities, but neither could real estate groups beat back any of the existing laws. And in some cities mayoral candidates—Ray Flynn in Boston, Art Agnos in San Francisco and Anthony Cucci in Jersey City—vaulted into office as champions of tenants' rights and rent control.

Unable to roll back rent control at the



## Approach to rent control is key to Kemp's intentions

local level, landlords, led by the National Multi Housing Council (NMHC), a Washington, D.C.-based lobby group, have tried to defeat rent control by looking to the federal and state governments for help. The NMHC has successfully pressured 14 states—Utah, Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Minnesota, Oregon, Louisiana, Michigan, Oklahoma, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Washington and Georgia—to pass legislation pre-empting local governments from enacting rent control. But none of these states had cities with rent control ordinances. In contrast, affordable housing advocates in California, where several cities and suburbs have adopted rent control, have thwarted referenda and legislative efforts, bankrolled by apartment owners and real estate groups, to pre-empt local rent control laws.

**Big government:** In 1980 the real estate industry moved the battlefield to Washington. Rep. Chalmers Wylie (R-OH) introduced legislation to prohibit the use of federal funds in cities with rent control. His amendment passed the House with a comfortable majority but died in the Senate. When Ronald Reagan was elected president, his transition team recommended a similar measure. In 1981 and 1982 Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R-NY) filed legislation to cut off federal housing funds to cities with rent control, including New York. After a bruising battle that included intense lobbying by tenant groups and help from then House Speaker Tip O'Neill, the administration-backed D'Amato bill went down to defeat. Many Republicans who opposed rent control viewed the measure as unwarranted federal involvement in local affairs.

Meanwhile, Reagan began his spending cuts. By the mid-'80s faces of the homeless began appearing nightly on TV news and the covers of newsweeklies. When the housing problem wouldn't go away, the Reagan administration fished out the red herring of rent control. If the housing problem persisted, the Reaganites argued, it must be due to overzealous government regulation, not federal housing cutbacks.

In fact, the reverse is true. Where there is a severe housing shortage and low va-

cancy rates, rents begin to escalate. Low-income tenants get pushed into the streets and shelters, and tenants who can hold on start to push for rent control.

Tucker's study argues that rent control causes homelessness. This is like arguing that the sun comes up because the rooster crows. Tucker concedes that his analysis "cannot prove cause and effect"—it can only demonstrate coincidence. But, he adds, "once correlations have been discovered, however, we can theorize about what the causal connections might be."

Most people, using common sense, recognize that rent control helps prevent homelessness. But Tucker's ideas have been heavily promoted by his allies in the right-wing network. Last May, for example, conservative Sen. William Armstrong (R-CO) added a last-minute amendment to the bill reauthorizing McKinney Act funds for the homeless that requires HUD to study how the growth of homelessness might be caused by local rent control laws. Despite the opposition of homeless advocates, Armstrong's amendment passed, and HUD has until October to produce the report. With Bush in the White House and Kemp installed at HUD, don't be surprised if Tucker's conclusions get the U.S. government's seal of approval. Conservatives hope that, bolstered by this and other studies, Kemp will withhold federal housing funds to localities that adopt rent control.

The arguments against rent control

crumble when confronted by empirical evidence based on real experience. Most independent studies—such as those reported in *Rethinking Rental Housing*, a study by Richard Appelbaum of the University of California and John Gilderbloom of the University of Louisville—compare localities with and without rent control. They found that rent control has not had any adverse impact on new construction, housing maintenance, abandonment or property taxes. In New Jersey, which has about half of all rent control cities in the country, developers continue to build apartments in rent controlled communities. Indeed, according to Appelbaum and Gilderbloom, some rent-controlled towns actually outpaced non-controlled ones in the percentage and actual increase in new apartment construction.

A study of local rent control—conducted last October by the Urban Institute to evaluate Washington, D.C.'s program—found that controls primarily benefited the elderly, the poor and families with kids, typically saving them \$100 a month, while having little impact on new construction, repairs or housing values.

Such findings are due primarily to what economist Anthony Downs of the Brookings Institution called the "temperate" character of most local rent control laws. They exempt all newly constructed housing, guarantee a fair and reasonable return on investment and allow annual rent increases as necessary to cover increased operating costs. Rent control simply limits extreme rent increases where absentee landlords can otherwise take advantage of tight housing markets. The amount of new apartment construction is best explained by land prices, zoning laws, changes in interest rates, the demographics (income and employment) of an area, as well as the availability of government housing subsidies.

Competing studies of rent control may appear to be little more than academic hair-splitting. But their impact is real, for they provide many newspapers and politicians with the ammunition to shoot down rent control and promote gentrification and risk.

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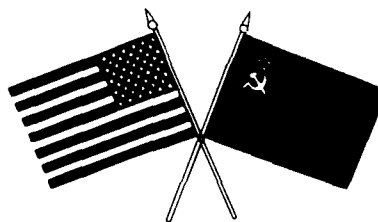
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Continued from preceding page

ing real estate values. And the conservative propaganda network does its job. Whereas the lengthy Appelbaum-Gilderbloom book, published by a small university press, has received little public attention, the short and to-the-point studies by Tucker and others have been widely disseminated by conservative think tanks and have found their way into the mainstream media and onto the desks of city councilors, state legislators and Congress members.

**The real issue:** As part and parcel of their attack on government regulation, the right-wing assault against rent control serves to confirm laissez-faire economics and masks the real causes of the housing crisis—the speculative nature of the housing market and the maldistribution of income in the U.S.

Some argue that housing assistance, like Social Security, should be targeted to the poor to make it more efficient and equitable—in other words, create a means test. But programs that serve only the poor are demeaning and often less efficient, causing an added bureaucracy to check for cheats and, more importantly, to undercut broad public support for the program.

In New York, critics like Tucker complain that rent control helps actress Mia Farrow, Mayor Ed Koch and other affluent tenants. This argument has nothing to do with helping the poor or building low-cost housing. Instead, it addresses the issue of fairness. But even in New York, where 70 percent of all renters have household incomes under \$25,000 a year, most tenants pay more for rent than they can afford.

As Bush and Kemp will soon discover, the housing crisis has become a growing

nightmare, not only for the very poor, but also for the middle class. The level of home-ownership is declining for the first time in decades. Home foreclosures are now the highest on record. Thanks to the Reagan-era deregulation of the banking industry, the neighborhood savings bank that provided homeowner loans at reasonable rates is a thing of the past; savings institutions that expanded their portfolios to unfamiliar territory in a frenzy to compete with commercial banks are now failing at the highest rate since the Depression, and Congress is staring at a bailout of S&Ls more costly than the entire federal deficit.

Kemp's HUD predecessor, Samuel Pierce, put up little resistance to Reagan's efforts to dismantle 50 years of federal housing programs. During the '80s the HUD budget shouldered the largest cutbacks of any federal program—the budgets went from \$33 billion in 1981 to \$8 billion this year. During the '70s federal assistance helped to build 200,000 to 300,000 new low-rent apartments a year. This year the number will not reach 15,000.

During the presidential debates Bush sought to separate the rising epidemic of homelessness from the larger housing issue. Portraying the homeless primarily as alcoholics and the mentally ill, he chose to blame the victim. Bush's slogan "a thousand points of light" suggests that the solution to homelessness is more shelters run by non-profit agencies, funded through private charity and staffed by volunteers. In the press conference announcing Kemp's nomination, Bush pointed to the federal McKinney Act—a small-scale program to help private agencies and church groups create more shelters and

soup kitchens—as his favorite solution.

It is unclear whether Kemp shares these sentiments. At the same press conference, Kemp was bolder than Bush. He pledged to "wage war on poverty" and to house the homeless, but he offered no specifics.

**The likely scenario:** What's obviously needed is a renewed commitment by the federal government to help build housing for both the poor and the middle class. As a high-profile figure with his own political following and good relations with his former colleagues in Congress, Kemp could forge a coalition to challenge Bush's budget-cutters and expand the resources for housing. Kemp even hinted at this possibility at his press conference, saying, "I don't believe we're going to balance the budget by cutting housing."

Kemp's most likely response will be to expand the Reagan program to give the poor housing vouchers so they can find apartments in the private market. Currently, only 28 percent of America's poor live in subsidized housing—the lowest level of any industrial nation. Most low-income families—at least 6 million—receive no housing assistance at all.

Conservatives like the voucher approach because it relies on private market forces and is cheaper than building new subsidized apartments. In the December 12, 1988, *Wall Street Journal*, for example, economist Edgar Olsen claimed that vouchers can serve more poor families for the same money than building new low-rent apartments. But facts are stubborn things: presently about half of the low-income tenants who now receive vouchers return them unused because of the scarcity of apartments.

Most housing experts agree that even an expanded voucher program won't work unless Washington helps expand the overall supply of affordable housing. The National Low-Income Housing Coalition wants Bush and Congress at least to double the housing budget (to about \$20 billion) from its current level of 1 percent of all federal spending. Even that would leave housing programs far below their levels (7 percent of the budget) when Reagan took office in 1981. In 1980 military

spending outpaced housing spending by a 7-to-1 ratio, but by 1988 the margin had grown to more than 40-to-1.

The question, however, is not only allocating more money, but how the money gets spent. Many legislators and much of the public view housing production subsidies as giveaway programs for wealthy, politically connected developers. So perhaps the only silver lining in the dark cloud of President Reagan's housing cuts has been the emergence of thousands of community-based, non-profit housing developers. In cities like Boston, Baltimore, Chicago, San Francisco, Minneapolis and Cleveland, non-profit groups now form the backbone of local efforts to house poor and working-class people. During this decade of federal austerity, these non-profit entrepreneurs have patched together financial support from local governments, private foundations and churches to construct and rehabilitate low-income housing. In contrast to past programs (like the Section 8 construction program), the housing sponsored by community development corporations, unions and churches is more cost-effective and permanently affordable. Rep. Joe Kennedy (D-MA) filed legislation last year—the Community Housing Partnership Act—to provide federal matching funds to expand the number and capacity of non-profit groups to build affordable housing. Despite its emphasis on non-profits, the Kennedy bill might have some appeal to Republicans who like its "self-help" aspects.

Yet until there is an adequate supply of affordable housing, rent control remains a necessity—the main way local governments can deal with skyrocketing rents and a shortage created by Washington. Otherwise, the millions of tenants nationwide now protected by rent control could be among the first victims of President Bush's kinder, gentler housing policy.

**John Atlas** is president of the National Housing Institute, editor of *Shelter Force* magazine and chair of New Jersey Citizen Action. **Peter Dreier** is director of housing at the Boston Redevelopment Authority and housing policy adviser to Boston Mayor Raymond Flynn.

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By Tariq Ali

**M**ANUSCRIPTS DON'T BURN," wrote Mikhail Bulgakov, the great Soviet novelist of the '20s and '30s, in a thinly veiled rebuke to the Stalinist censors. But the same does not apply to a writer, who is, after all, only made of bones and flesh. Messages often survive, but all messengers are mortal. What then are we to make of the grotesque scenario through which we are all living? A multiplication of tragedies is taking place.

First, of course, there is the plight of the writer Salman Rushdie, who is holed up in a secure house and guarded day and night by the British security forces—an Iranian hostage on British soil. Reality, as we know, is stranger than most fiction. The scenes we are observing could easily be excerpts from a Rushdie novel. But don't be deceived. They are not surreal—only too real—and the novelist is seriously threatened. Even if Rushdie survives this crisis, the specter of death will haunt him for the rest of his life.

There is, however, an even bigger tragedy. For this whole affair has now transcended both Salman Rushdie and his book, *The Satanic Verses*. This is the tragedy of Islam and its place in the modern world.

**Satanic gangsters:** When the Ayatollah Khomeini first pronounced his death sentence more than two weeks ago, my first reaction was one of disbelief. Was it really possible that the exalted spiritual leader of Shi'ite Islam was publicly ordering the execution of a novelist who writes exclusively in the English language? Was it just my imagination or was it really the case that the main inspirer of the Islamic Republic was talking like a mafia godfather? The day after, another cleric decided to mimic the satanic gangsters of the U.S. A price was put on Rushdie's head: \$3 million for any Moslem who killed him and \$1 million for anyone else. And all this in the name of Allah, the Compassionate and Merciful?

Why was money necessary in the first place? Khomeini had offered any Moslem assassin a one-way ticket to heaven. Let us pause and reflect on this for a moment. Surely the decision on who goes to heaven—or, for that matter, to hell—rests with the Creator. How dare anyone abrogate that right?

Is Imam Khomeini now claiming to be a prophet in direct contact with his Maker? Why don't good Moslems find Khomeini's words heretical? And, digressing slightly, is it not the case that Islam abhors priestly hierarchies and expressly forbids the creation of any ideological monopoly by the clerics? All Moslems are supposed to be equal in the sight of God. Why, then, these frenzied Nuremberg-style rallies in which Shi'ite Moslems abase them-

## The satanic versus the divine



Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* touched off a firestorm of controversy among Islamic fundamentalists.

selves before a mere priest?

In fact, very little of what is now taking place has much to do with religion. Of course, many non-fundamentalist Moslems have actually read the novel and find some passages offensive, but most of them would agree that the only way to combat Rushdie is through a battle of ideas. This is both legitimate and the only serious way of convincing people. Let us not forget that the first cadres of the Islamic faith were not won over at the point of a sword, but through a process of debate and discussion.

Khomeini is utilizing the hullabaloo over *The Satanic Verses* to impose a ruthlessly conformist cultural model within Islam. Stalin and his cultural commissars gave the

world "socialist realism." Khomeini and his ideological policemen insist upon their particular brand of "Islamic realism." Rushdie has become a convenient pretext to further this aim (among others). The Iranian clergy has not scored any real victories against the infidels. Their wrath has been concentrated on Moslems.

**With God on our side:** The Iran-Iraq War cost more than 1 million lives on both sides. Where was Islam when this conflict was taking place? Which side did God support? And how many dissenters from within the cultural tradition of Islam have been exterminated by the zealots? Tens of thousands of political prisoners have been wiped out. Women prisoners who were virgins have

been raped in prison. Why? Because virgins, say the Ayatollah's men, go straight to heaven. Mass rape ensures an easy passage to hell. Is this the Islam that believers want to present to the world?

Islam has always had a tolerant side. There is a long tradition of intellectual dissent in the Moslem world. After the Prophet's death, his youngest wife, Ayesha, actually raised the banner of revolt against the anointed successor. Disputes on the interpretation of Islam continue to this day. The richness of early Islamic civilization has left its mark on the entire world. Culture and science owe a great deal to that old tradition. Would *The Arabian Nights*, I wonder, get a clean bill of health today from the Imam in Tehran?

On the Indian subcontinent (that produced Salman Rushdie) Islam was popularized by Sufi holy men who were subsequently venerated as saints. Their ecstatic dances and existential poetry shaped Islam throughout Northern India. This was (and is) a joyous Islam that threatens nobody, that preaches an individual communion with the Great Sufi in the sky and that is, for that very reason, loathed by the puritanical preachers of fundamentalism. To this day, the music influenced by the Sufi tradition mocks the hypocrisy

of the mullahs.

**Cynical agitating:** Take, for instance, the following fact. One instigator of the riot over Rushdie's novel in Islamabad, Pakistan, that led to the loss of six lives was a Maulana named Kausar Niazi. But during the '60s and '70s, Niazi was a ferocious opponent of the Jamaat-i-Islami brand of fundamentalism. For this reason, former Pakistani leader Zulfikar Ali Bhutto hired him and made him a cabinet minister. He was Bhutto's weapon against the fundamentalists. Niazi, a colorful fellow, enjoyed his drink and the company of dancing girls. Bhutto's nickname for him was Maulana Whiskey. Now, deprived of power and influence, old Whiskey is trying to rehabilitate himself with his former enemies and pressuring Bhutto's daughter to take him seriously with his protests of the novel. What I want to know is why he waited several months after *The Satanic Verses* was published in England and on the subcontinent.

All the great Moslem poets of India have, at some time or another, questioned the practice of religion. Ghalib, Iqbal and Faiz were all embroiled in conflicts with the mullahs. When Iqbal wrote his *Complaint to God*, he was denounced by the clergy as an apostate. His message, written in his poem "New Temple," denounced organized religion. It would be dismissed out of hand in Tehran, but Moslems in South Asia could learn a great deal from these words of the poet:

I shall tell the truth, O Brahman, but take it not as an offense:

The idols in thy temple have decayed. Thou hast learnt from these images to bear ill will to thine own people; And God has taught the Moslem preacher the ways of strife.

My heart was sick: I turned away both from the temple and the Ka'ba; From the sermons of the preacher and from thy fairy tales, oh Brahman.

To thee images of stone embody the divine—

For me, every particle of my country's dust is a deity. Come, let us remove all that causes estrangement.

Let us reconcile those that have turned away from each other, remove all sign of division.

Desolation has reigned for long in the habitation of my heart—

Come, let us build a new temple in our land,

Let our holy place be higher than any on the earth.

Let us raise its pinnacle till it touches the lapels of the sky;

Let us awake every morning to sing the sweetest songs,

And give worshipers the wine of love to drink. ■

Tariq Ali is on the editorial board of *New Left Review* and is producer of the British television show on which Salman Rushdie gave an interview the day he went into hiding.

**Khomeini is using the hullabaloo over Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* to impose a ruthlessly conformist cultural model within Islam. Khomeini and his ideological policemen insist upon their fundamentalist brand of "Islamic realism." Rushdie has become a convenient pretext to further this aim.**





Editor's ouster sparks protest in Atlanta: powerful interests and personal styles clash at the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

Creative Loafing

## Playing editorial roulette in Atlanta

By Roger Kerson

**W**HEN MAJOR NEWS HAPPENS—an election, an assassination, an unexpected disaster—big-city newsrooms usually hum with activity. Something major happened in Atlanta on Friday, November 4, 1988, but the newsroom of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* did not hum. It stopped.

Word spread instantly around the newsroom about the resignation of Bill Kovach, the paper's popular editor in chief. Kovach, a former Washington bureau chief for the *New York Times*, ran the *Journal-Constitution* from December of 1986 until his resignation last November 4. He was credited with vastly improving the editorial content of the paper, which is owned by Cox Enterprises, a media conglomerate with holdings that include 18 daily papers, eight television stations, 12 radio stations and 23 cable systems.

**Journalism heaven:** Cox Enterprises is a privately held corporation owned by Anne Cox Chambers, 68, and Susan Cox Anthony, 65, daughters of James Middleton "Governor" Cox, the founder of the chain. James Cox Kennedy, son of the Governor, is the company's chairman and chief executive. The publisher of the *Journal-Constitution*, Cox's most prestigious property, is Jay Smith, who has previously served in similar posts for Cox newspapers in Austin, Texas, and Dayton, Ohio.

Kovach, a North Carolina native,

came to Atlanta in 1986, shortly after he was passed over for the managing editor's post at the *New York Times*. He was determined, he said, to make the *Journal-Constitution* the South's best paper. He added 50 editorial staffers and championed a "take no prisoners" approach to the news, with a heavy emphasis on investigative reporting.

### JOURNALISM

"People I talked to had the feeling that they'd died and gone to journalism heaven," says urban sociologist Calvin Bradford. He spent several days in the *Journal-Constitution* newsroom in the fall of 1987, when the paper hired him as a consultant for an investigative series on racially discriminatory banking practices.

**Under now-departed editor Bill Kovach, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* vastly improved its performance and reputation.**

Aggressive reporting was a departure for the *Journal-Constitution*, according to an article about Kovach's resignation by Anne Corwin, news editor of the Atlanta weekly *Creative*

*Loafing*. In previous years, she wrote, the paper had been "heavily invested in sports and fuzzy front-page color photos.... Critical stories were frequently killed, and others left simply untouched."

Under Kovach, says one *Journal-Constitution* reporter who prefers to remain unidentified, "there was a feeling that there were no more topics that were off-limits, no more stories that we knew better than to write." The reporter says that under former editor Bill Minter—a close friend of James Cox Kennedy—"it was never the case that anyone came out and said 'Don't do that story. But...it was well known that he had a relative in public relations at Georgia Power [the area's largest utility company]. Stuff like that influenced the news."

**Wild and woolly:** There were no protected relatives under Kovach. The paper gave heavy coverage to allegations—later proven false—that Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young had been seen using cocaine. Other more solid exposés included articles about illegal political solicitations by Georgia Power and bribes offered in the Soviet Union by Coca-Cola (one of Atlanta's largest and most influential corporations).

An in-depth series on racially discriminatory lending practices, which forcefully indicted the entire Atlanta banking industry, had a dramatic impact. Community organizations had been trying to get banks to lend more money in low-income black neighborhoods for nearly two years

without success. A few weeks after the *Journal-Constitution* series appeared in May 1988, the city's financial institutions had committed more than \$60 million to low-income lending programs.

Community organizers loved the new look of the *Journal-Constitution*. While Kovach was running the paper, says Craig Taylor, director of the South Atlanta Land Trust, a neighborhood improvement group, reporters would frequently call him looking for news stories on community issues.

"It was as if the news staff was given their marching orders to go out there and find news," says Taylor. "I found it refreshing. I didn't have to call the newspaper to try to find out from the city desk who was supposed to be doing what."

Kovach, however, ruffled feathers in the top management of Cox Enterprises. Kovach battled constantly with the front office over issues such as the news budget, control of the Cox Enterprises Washington news bureau and pressure to reshape the paper into what he saw as a trivialized *USA Today* format.

Those conflicts came to a head on November 4, apparently over the issue of the Cox Washington bureau, which serves all of the papers in the Cox chain as well as the *Journal-Constitution*. Kovach wanted the bureau to do fewer soft features and focus more on breaking national news, but he had been unable to budge bureau chief Andrew Glass, a longtime Cox veteran.

Publisher Jay Smith received word that Kovach was making behind-the-scenes criticisms about Glass and the Washington bureau, and he called the editor into his office for a reprimand. Kovach offered his resignation—and Smith accepted it.

This was not the first time such a scene had been played, Smith told *In These Times*. "At each point it seemed to be that unless Bill got 100 percent of what he wanted, then I was confronted with a threat to resign," he says. "There had been several occasions where a threat was made or implied, and at each point, I would tell him that wasn't what I wanted."

Eventually, Smith says, he became fed up with Kovach's temper and told him to quit threatening to quit. In Smith's view, the split was caused by Kovach's outsized ego and by his refusal to compromise on even the smallest issue. Kovach did not answer several requests from *In These Times* for an interview, but a senior *Journal-Constitution* staffer with inside knowledge of the situation says that Kovach had in fact compromised on many issues, but that he felt Smith and higher-ups in Cox management were looking for a way to force him out of his job.

**Business as usual?** If Cox Enterprises did push Kovach from his post, the company has some explaining to do. During his two years at the *Journal-Constitution*, Kovach vastly improved the paper's performance and reputation. The paper was nominated for four 1987 Pulitzers; in 1988 there were nationwide plaudits for the paper's coverage of the Democratic National Convention in Atlanta. And circulation was on the rise.

This sounds like the track record of an editor who deserves a raise, not a reprimand—even if he does have a hot temper. After Kovach quit, many people quickly assumed that he was forced from his job because of pressure from the Atlanta business community, which preferred the soft-touch reporting of an earlier era. Kovach's resignation was covered by the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and the *Wall Street Journal*—and all three stories mentioned the fact that Atlanta's leading corporate citizens were unhappy with how they were being treated by the "new" *Journal-Constitution*.

Indeed, the Kovach resignation echoes an unpleasant incident from the newspaper's past: in 1969 editorial writer Eugene Patterson was forced out of his job after he ran some critical pieces about Georgia Power. When Kovach quit, many *Journal-Constitution* staffers felt that history was repeating itself.

Immediately after Kovach resigned, newsroom staffers wrote an ad praising Kovach and asking the paper's management to reconsider his resignation. By the end of the day reporters had raised \$3,000; the ad ran the next day with 124 names



on it. Staff members began wearing black armbands around the building, and on Monday, November 7, 13 reporters and editors and a staff photographer had a stormy meeting with Smith.

"You can say we were assertive," says reporter Tracy Thompson. "He was sort of missing hunks of skin when he left. It was a very confrontational meeting."

Smith says that the meeting took place at his initiative. "I asked that we assemble the toughest questioners...who had been involved in getting the ad in. We really hashed it out."

"They came in wearing black armbands," Smith recalls. The on-the-record session, he feels, helped answer uncomfortable questions about Kovach's resignation. "The tape recorder was on," he says, "notepads were out. The transcript that emerged went a long way to showing folks that there was a lot more to the story."

A *Journal-Constitution* staffer provided *In These Times* with a copy of the transcript. It reveals an angry group of reporters and editors who feel they have been betrayed by short-sighted corporate managers—a rare inside look at how journalists view the conflicting demands of their profession.

Some of the toughest comments during the session came from Bill Dedman, a 27-year-old reporter who wrote the paper's series on racially discriminatory banking practices. "What confidence do we have," Dedman asked Smith, "that we won't step back into what we all know was the case before, which was not so much where stories get written and spiked, but people know which stories not to write. The bank stories—I didn't think of those first; Hal [Straus, currently science and medicine editor] thought of them three or four years ago, but he was told not to do them.... It's an atmosphere, a tone, a direction, and we fear much of that has been pissed away."

"It hasn't," responded Smith. "I promise you, it hasn't.... My hope and expectation is that we're going to continue to encourage strong, aggressive reporting."

**Wheelchair journalism:** Smith tried to explain to the assembled staff members the issues that had led to a breakdown of "mutual trust" between himself and Kovach. He talked about budget fights, the Washington bureau and his commitment to what he described as "marginal readers."

"One of the issues that concerns me," he said, "not just about our paper, but about our industry...you

look at the national measures of readership, and newspapers are losing ground in terms of their ability to match up with household growth and with people growth.... There's someday out there when folks will say, 'Hey, newspapers are not necessary.'"

Smith hotly denied that he was trying to imitate *USA Today*. As he describes it, the effort to reach non-readers sounds sort of like a literacy crusade. But when staff members

## Will aggressive reporting be replaced by McPaper-clone happy news?

pushed him for specifics about the kind of stories he wanted to see that he wasn't seeing under Kovach, he came up with an example that sounds perfectly fit for the Nation's McPaper.

"I thought this morning, the story of the fellow in the wheelchair who made it to the top of the IBM Tower," he said, referring to a front-page human interest story, "that was a hell of a good story. But we were not

consistently enough alert to that story that touches all of us, at least intrigues us sufficiently to talk about."

"What you're saying," replied Tracy Thompson, "sounds like a conflict between those who believe it's our job to tell people what they need to know and those who think it's our job to tell people what they want to read."

"I don't see the conflict," said Smith. "There's a great...Louis Armstrong quote: 'I play four for the audience and one for myself.'"

Smith did not succeed in winning over his own skeptical audience. "I'm sorry this happened," he said as the hour-long session came to a close. "Not half as sorry as we are," shot back features writer Jim Auchmuty. Dedman offered Smith a black armband, but Smith declined to wear it.

**Principles and paychecks:** When he spoke with *In These Times* some six weeks after Kovach had resigned, Smith was convinced that the morale crisis caused by the incident had passed. He remains optimistic about the future of the *Journal-Constitution*, but some reporters are not so sure. "Newspapers can decline actively or passively," said Dedman in December. "Nobody expects anything active. We expect

to be on hold for about six months." Shortly afterward Dedman left to take a job with the *Washington Post*.

One indication of the future direction of the paper will be how many staffers follow Dedman out the door. So far, Jay Smith points out proudly, only a few people out of a news staff of 400 have left.

The situation is not as rosy as it looks, says the anonymous senior staffer quoted above, who would like to hold on to his job for at least the immediate future.

"We've been defeated and we know it," he says. "Jay said, 'Anybody who doesn't like this policy or doesn't like what happened can start to look for work elsewhere.' There are a lot of people who just sort of decided to circulate their resumes."

Once people find other jobs, he says, there will be more resignations. More people would have left already, he says, but they are stuck to their present paychecks.

"Most of us aren't independently wealthy," he says. "The people who hold our mortgages don't necessarily understand our principles." ■

**Roger Kerson** is a Chicago-based freelance writer. He is also a research and organizing consultant for the National Training and Information Center, which serves low-income community groups.

# IN THE ARTS

## High Fidelity and the wild Cuban mix

**The Uncompromising Revolution**  
Directed by Saul Landau

By David Pedersen

**T**HE UNCOMPROMISING REVOLUTION uses low-key drama, created by its editing style, to treat large and small themes, intermittently, to show the people, the landscape, the rhythms and texture of Cuba after three decades of revolution. Just as Castro's revolution ended the chance for Americans to escape to Cuba for gambling, abortion, sex, rum and cigars, Saul Landau's new film dispels the notion of a similar mindless escape to the movies. Rather than quick-fix Hollywood entertainment or stone-cold network-style documentary, Landau creates a tapestry of words and thought-provoking images.

Landau, a senior fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies, has for 30 years been a studious watcher of Cuba and U.S. foreign policy. Weaving together archival footage, occasional flashbacks from his 1968 film, *Fidel*, recent interviews with Castro and a conglomeration of on-the-street and on-location interviews with a variety of Cubans, Landau at-

tempts to capture filmically what political scientists have tried in vain to do empirically: to understand Cuba's revolution.

**From colony to nation:** In contrast to Landau's *Fidel*, *Uncompromising Revolution* shatters the romantic illusions of revolution with a cinematic bath of cold reality. The film indicates that the revolution has been about the challenge of developing from a colony to a nation, of using reason to overcome supersti-

### FILM

tion, a battle led by Castro. Cuban culture is almost 500 years old. In the film a woman who is 102 recalls the days of the Spaniards and the arrival of the Americans after the bombing of the *Maine* in 1898.

From the wrinkled face of the woman, remembering details of a war 91 years ago, the film dissolves into black-and-white images of Marines charging up San Juan Hill, occupying the island, gambling, having fun at Cuban expense. The footage shows why the revolution took the form it did, why Cubans remember and Americans have no memory.

The film dissolves from the past to the present, building montages of

a cross section of the island, touching on diverse aspects of Cuban life, from cowboys and engineers to doctors and nuclear-power workers. *Uncompromising Revolution* moves beyond TV documentary styles through the unexpected, as when Landau interjects his narration with ironic humor.

In a lens factory near Havana, Castro chats with the workers and puts his arm on the shoulders of a technician. As Castro's entourage, including Landau and his film crew, moves through the factory, the camera swings around to show the man with the shoulder that Castro touched. He is grinning in rapture. Landau narrates, in his typically soft and mirthful way, that this man has just had a "mild ecstatic experience." Then the camera is back on Castro, leading the way out of the factory—with his arm around Landau.

Almost every sequence that is established as "truth" finds itself challenged by subsequent sequences. This style leaves the feeling that the film provides few "hard facts." Yet the conflicting images fight their way to a synthesis.

The film contains layers, one of

## Landau has for 30 years been a studious watcher of Cuba and U.S. foreign policy.

which is a dialogue conducted by Landau, as narrator, with the rest of the characters in the film. Some may find *The Uncompromising Revolution* frustrating, since the film offers no easy answers. Indeed, the film form implicitly challenges traditional methods of examining Cuba and revolution. The Cuban revolution, like all political life, is not seen by Landau as a series of questions or a collection of facts.

Landau demands and expects some mental work from his audience. The film covers much ground in a short time. We are given a history lesson on Cuba's involvement in Angola. We are introduced to "Santeria," the popular religion of Cuba, steeped with voodoo-like healing rituals. We see idle construction workers dozing on their brooms, explaining how "rectification" is needed, how people must work harder. "He is sweeping," one worker indicates as his partner lazily pushes dirt from one pile to another.

**Who's directing?** Castro, true to his role in Cuba, becomes the film's dominating voice. We see him in his jeep leading the film crew all over Cuba. Landau interjects, "There is no doubt about who is directing the revolution—or this film." A flashback shows Castro in 1968 listening to a woman complain and then telling an assistant to write down what she said. This wryly dovetails to 1988 and an almost identical situation.

*The Uncompromising Revolution* presents Cuba as a mélange of sights, sounds and colors that does not eas-

ily fit into Castro's disciplined model. We see a glorious amorphous mass striving for noble goals yet oozing sensuality. Castro exhorts the crowd at a rally to "be like Che" and then enumerates the virtues of the communist saint of Cuba. The film compares the faces of just plain folk to the words of their leader, who almost pleads with his people to shape up, to make a reality of his dream, to construct an egalitarian communist society.

Landau's penchant for political imagery comes from decades of activism and controversial filmmaking. From his earliest movies Landau has been a maverick. In a public television film, *Losing Just the Same* (with Richard Moore) in 1966 he inserted dream sequences into a film on life in the Oakland, Calif., ghetto, when such "manufactured" sequences were taboo for documentaries. In a 1971 feature film, *Que Hacer*, he alternated between documentary and fiction to develop a dialogue not only over the meaning of Salvador Allende's election in Chile, but also about how movies shape politics in the current age. In *Brazil: Report on Torture* (made with Haskell Wexler) camera beeps distract the viewers from otherwise excruciatingly painful recreations of torture scenes, forcing the viewers into the consciousness that they are watching a film about torture, not experiencing vicariously real torture. ■

**David Pedersen** works for the Institute for Policy Studies and writes about film.



# Germany

Continued from page 11

However, Libya, unlike Iraq, expressed willingness to support a universal chemical weapons ban and allow international inspection, so long as it was "not discriminatory."

Last December 22 a delegation of U.S. experts came to Bonn with their satellite photos of Rabta, but with "no concrete proof" of German participation. Two questions were entangled: the nature of the Rabta production and German involvement. At this stage evidence for both was circumstantial. The American evidence that Pharma 150 was a chemical weapons plant was in the way it was built. When Bonn officials asked whether the U.S. experts would testify before German courts, they promised to answer in mid-January. Then in the new year U.S. officials leaked the story to Stephen Engelberg and Michael Gordon of *The New York Times*.

The Kohl government dug in its heels, angry at being publicly attacked while it was still conducting its investigation. Then evidence came out that Imhausen was indeed involved. On January 19 Genscher's foreign ministry complained of the "considerable disruption of foreign relations through illegal exports for a Libyan chemical weapons plant." Bonn gave in.

All doubts vanished. "According to the present judgment of the federal government, the Rabta installation is not only suitable to, but deliberately set up for the manufacture of chemical weapons," the Schäuble report concluded.

**Lone dissenter:** Only Alfred Mechtersheimer, a retired Bundeswehr officer, noted peace researcher and Green member of parliament, startled the Bundestag by complaining that the Schäuble report failed to present the evidence that had caused the government to change its opinion. "The report is

already erroneous in its title," Mechtersheimer said, "because it isn't about 'possible participation of German firms in Libyan chemical weapons production,' but about participation of German firms in possible Libyan chemical weapons production."

Mechtersheimer said a correctly drawn up report, after an inconclusive visit to Rabta, would have reached three conclusions: 1. Proof exists of pharmaceutical production in Rabta. 2. Proof of a chemical weapons factory does not exist. 3. Proof that there is no chemical weapons production in Rabta doesn't exist either.

Mechtersheimer called the "fixation on Libya" a distraction from chemical weapons ban negotiations in Geneva, where every effort should be made "to see to it that the U.S. doesn't act like an alcoholic who forbids others from drinking." The U.S. emphasis on non-proliferation is dangerous because "it will have the same effect as nuclear non-pro-

liferation, building up central arsenals while not even succeeding in stopping proliferation," Mechtersheimer said. Alone in the left opposition, he stressed support for Genscher's efforts for a universal chemical weapons ban as "the only chance to stop poisoning the world."

Scarcely anyone else would dare follow Mechtersheimer out on the limb of suggesting that the U.S. might be wrong about Libyan chemical weapons manufacture. The situation is a little like Pascal's wager: the only way to lose is by defending Libya just before the U.S. comes up with proof that the chemical weapons plant exists. It's better to believe it.

Social Democrat Norbert Gansel even called on the Bonn government to demand that Libya give back whatever it got from German companies, "so that the U.S. cannot have grounds for military intervention."

The Schäuble report concluded that the Bonn government considered it "a foreign policy priority, in cooperation with partners and friends, to prevent Libya from taking up chemical weapons production."

The report also noted that "the governments of the U.S. and Israel appeared satisfied" with Bonn's measures to tighten export control. The president of the Jewish World Congress, Edgar Bronfman, also expressed satisfaction to Genscher, the report added.

Finally, the Schäuble report drew a political conclusion whose significance goes far beyond Libya or the chemical industry: "Preventing the spread of sensitive technology from the industrial countries to the Third World for military purposes will be one of the major international concerns of the next years and decades." □

## Let's End the Isolation of the Secular Left from the Religious Left

Few on the secular Left understand the social dimensions of the Gospel, and the way the Catholic bishops, in their recent pastoral letters, placed economic democracy on the national agenda and nuclear disarmament on the nation's conscience. Few have paid much attention to the progressive social witness of Protestants. Few know what Christian activists are doing in Latin America, South Africa, South Korea, and in the ghettos and barrios of our land. Few realize that the papacy has called for workers' ownership and self-management and that its economic views have acutely irritated apologists for big business. Few have considered the role of believers in the opposition to nuclear weapons and U.S. belligerence in Central America, and in the pro-democratic dissident movements in the East bloc.

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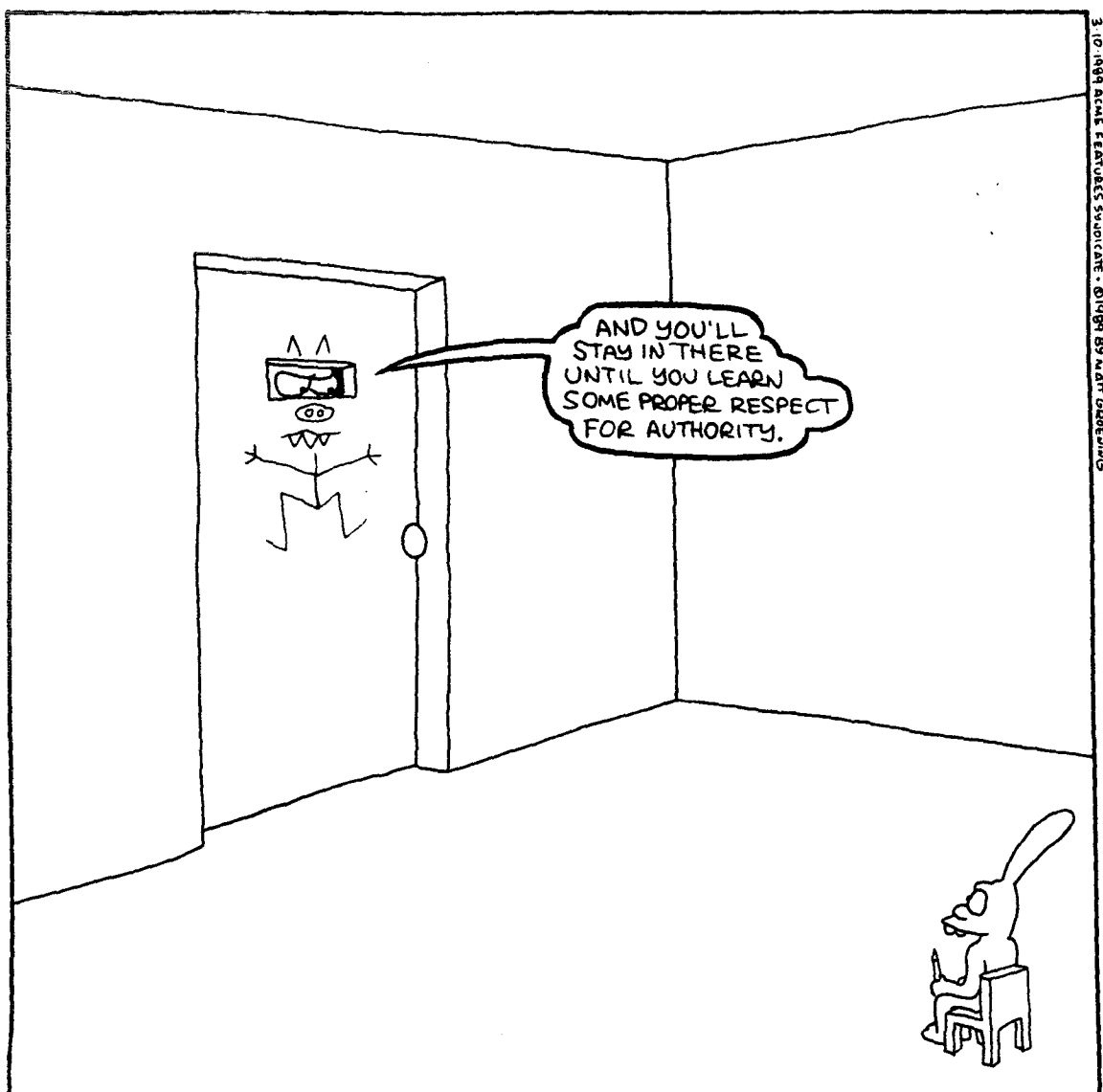
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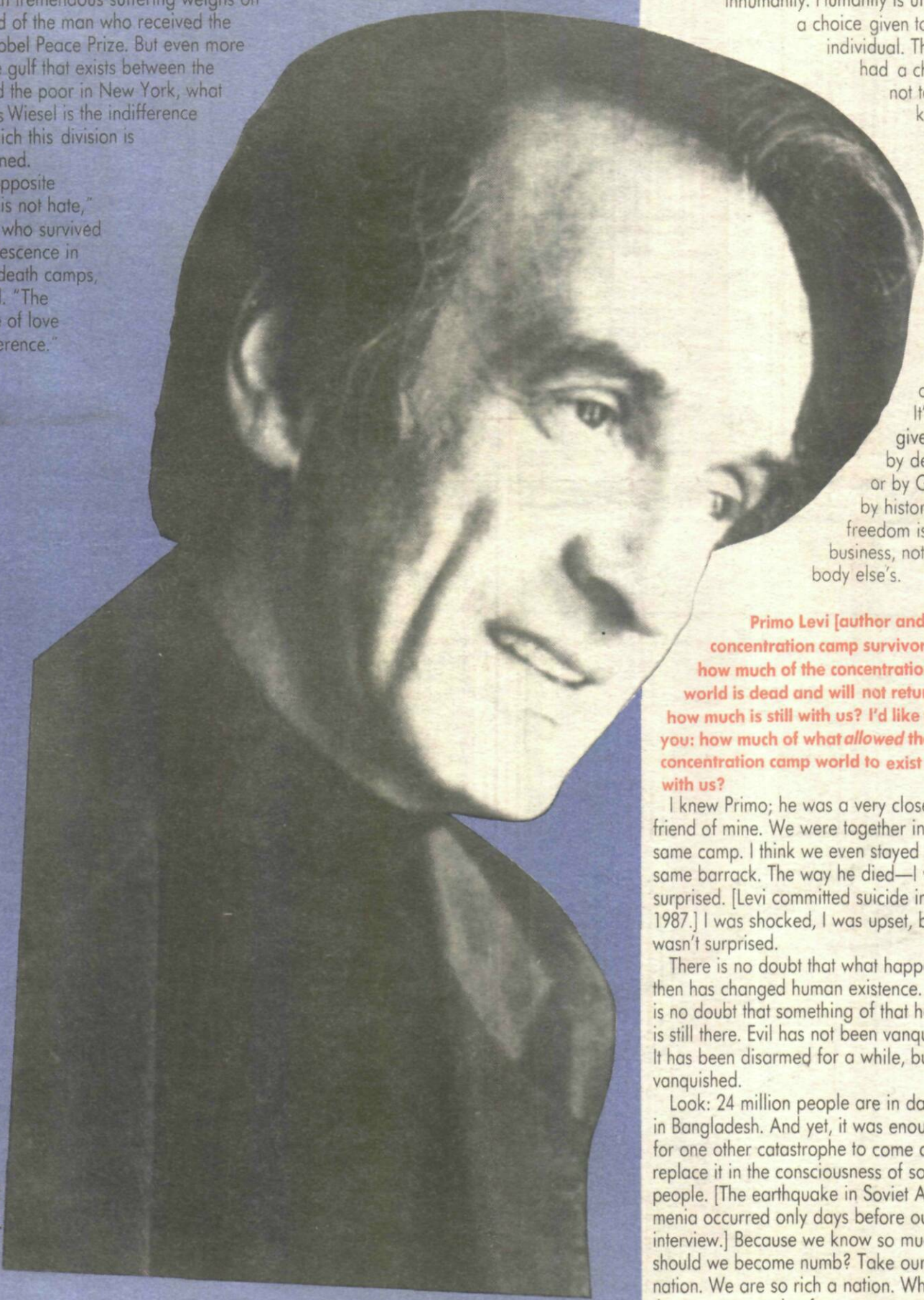
**T**he Manhattan apartment building in which Elie Wiesel lives is surrounded by legions of the homeless—just like any other fashionable high-rise in America's most powerful city. An estimated 75,000 homeless individuals live here. They lie in cardboard boxes placed over heating grates. They sleep in rags on the cold, beautiful marble stairs in Grand Central Station. They beg change from well-dressed passersby—a lucky few of whom carry in their pockets \$80 tickets to a popular Broadway musical about a poor man imprisoned for stealing a loaf of bread. The first cold snap of the year struck just before our interview, and two people froze to death on the sidewalks of New York.

The juxtaposition of so much wealth and such tremendous suffering weighs on the mind of the man who received the 1986 Nobel Peace Prize. But even more than the gulf that exists between the rich and the poor in New York, what horrifies Wiesel is the indifference with which this division is maintained.

"The opposite of love is not hate," Wiesel, who survived an adolescence in Hitler's death camps, has said. "The opposite of love is indifference."

# The Elie Wiesel Difference

By Osha Davidson



©Jerry Bauer

**Osha Davidson: In what essential way is today's world different because of the Holocaust?**

**Elie Wiesel:** We have learned certain things. We have learned to interfere in other people's business. After all, human rights activities are interference in the domestic activities of other nations. Until the Holocaust, nobody would accept that kind of interference.

Second, we learned that the impossible is possible. Which means that, if we are not careful, slaughter on a universal scale could become the norm—not the exception. We have learned to be suspicious: suspicious of promises. We have learned to take threats seriously. We have learned that the nuclear menace, the nuclear shadow, is real.

I think we have also learned the limits of humanity—as well as the limits of inhumanity. Humanity is ultimately a choice given to every individual. The killer had a choice not to be a killer.

Even in the camps we had a choice. That's an important choice. It's not given to us by destiny or by God or by history. Our freedom is our business, not some body else's.

**Primo Levi [author and concentration camp survivor] asked: how much of the concentration camp world is dead and will not return and how much is still with us? I'd like to ask you: how much of what allowed the concentration camp world to exist is still with us?**

I knew Primo; he was a very close friend of mine. We were together in the same camp. I think we even stayed in the same barrack. The way he died—I wasn't surprised. [Levi committed suicide in 1987.] I was shocked, I was upset, but I wasn't surprised.

There is no doubt that what happened then has changed human existence. There is no doubt that something of that hatred is still there. Evil has not been vanquished. It has been disarmed for a while, but not vanquished.

Look: 24 million people are in danger in Bangladesh. And yet, it was enough for one other catastrophe to come and replace it in the consciousness of so many people. [The earthquake in Soviet Armenia occurred only days before our interview.] Because we know so much, should we become numb? Take our own nation. We are so rich a nation. What we throw out every day from restaurants could feed a continent! Why not take 100 military aircraft loaded with food and send them to Africa, to Sudan, to Ethiopia and now to Bangladesh. Send architects and teachers and help a people that

needs help to survive.

If this indifference continues, we shall all be its victims. That is the fallout of the tragedy that befell my people.

**Do you see that indifference growing in America over the past decade?**

I wouldn't want to blame any particular group. Take President [Franklin D.] Roosevelt; he was known for his humanism, for his quest for democracy. But Roosevelt was indifferent to the Jewish plight during the war. After all the newspapers wrote about *Kristallnacht* [the night in 1938 on which the Nazis ordered the destruction of 300 Jewish synagogues and smashed the windows of stores owned by Jews throughout Germany and Austria]—it was not even six months after *Kristallnacht*—the ship *The St. Louis* came here with 1,200 Jewish men, women and children aboard. They were in Florida in American waters, and they were sent back. Roosevelt, the humanist, sent back 1,200 people knowing that they were going back to Nazism, to persecution, if not to death. And when he did so, what was the reaction of the country? Was there an outcry? No. So it's not the first time we are indifferent.

**But isn't it more acceptable to be indifferent today? Look at poverty, homelessness. There was a time when indifference was recognized as complicity. That idea seems to have been lost.**

Well, we are trying to bring it back. I am, at least. There is something basically wrong with us. After all, we were indifferent to the Indians. Not at first; first we killed them. But since then we are indifferent to their memory. We should remember day after day what we had done to the Indians.

As for the poor today—it's a disgrace. To have homeless people, hungry people—we have millions of people who live below the poverty level in this country. It is beyond me. I don't understand it. Maybe we need someone to wake us all up.... It is an urgent task, an immediate task. But we turn away. I think we are losing our own humanity.

**You've said that there are more people not free than free in this country. Who are you including in the category of "not free"—the poor, and those imprisoned by their own consciousness?**

Absolutely. I believe that if a person cannot feed his or her children, then his or her human rights are being violated. Economic freedom is just as important as political freedom.

And in Latin America—I don't understand all these discussions. Why not take 500,000 people into our country? We can afford to. We have so much. Why is it a big deal to open our doors and say, "Look, you need security; we shall provide you with security. You need happiness; we shall try to give you happiness." It would raise the moral standard of our nation to unprecedented heights. Why isn't it being done? I wish I knew the answer. ■

**Osha Davidson** writes regularly for *In These Times*.